

# FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY.

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY.

### GOLDEN FLEECE; OR, THE BOY BROKERS OF WALL STREET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.



"Help!" yelled Piggy O'Toole, as the young brokers seized and raised him from the floor by his arms and legs. "What shall we do with him?" asked King, stifling Piggy's cries. "Fire him out," grinned Seymour, nodding at the window.



# Fame and Fortune Weekly

## STORIES OF BOYS WHO MAKE MONEY

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# GOLDEN FLEECE;

OR,

## THE BOY BROKERS OF WALL STREET.

By A SELF-MADE MAN.

### CHAPTER I.

BOB SEYMOUR AND HIS SISTER, AND OTHER MATTERS CONNECTED WITH THE STORY.

"What's the matter, Carrie? You look as if you'd been crying," said Bob Seymour, messenger for Mortimer Judson, stock broker, of No. — Wall Street, to his pretty sister, who was employed as stenographer for Edward Stinson, also a stock broker, in the same building.

"I have. Mr. Bunny has been annoying me again with his attentions."

He has?" exclaimed Bob, indignantly. "Why don't you speak to Mr. Stinson about it?"

"I'm afraid to do that, Bob."

"Why?" asked her stalwart, seventeen-year-old brother, in surprise.

"Because Mr. Bunny does a lot of legal business for Mr. Stinson, and they're very friendly."

"That's no reason why that lawyer should make himself familiar with you."

"That's true, Bob; but he does, just the same."

"What does the man mean, anyhow? He's old enough to know better."

"He's all of fifty."

"That's what I thought. If his wife knew——"

"He isn't married, Bob. He's a bachelor."

"How do you know he is?"

"He told me so."

"Oh, he did? He's got a nerve. Well, this thing has got to stop," cried the boy, with a flash of the eye.

"I wish I knew some way of stopping him," said the girl, wistfully.

"You leave it to me, sis," said Bob, in a determined tone. "What that man needs is a bit of advice straight from the shoulder, and I'm the boy that's going to give it to him."

"No, no, Bob—please don't," she cried, earnestly, grasping him by the sleeve of his jacket.

"Why not?" asked her brother, in surprise.

"You might get into trouble."

"What! For protecting my sister against an antiquated old master? Don't you worry."

"But I would worry, Bob," she said, anxiously. "Mr. Bunny is also legal adviser to your employer, and he might get you discharged."

"I don't think," replied Bob, with a short laugh.

"You don't know, Bob. You're only a messenger, while Mr. Bunny is a lawyer with influence. Your employer, being his client, would listen to any complaint he might make against you."



"Oh, Judson isn't the only pebble on Wall Street," replied Bob, independently.

"That makes no difference, Bob. If he discharged you without a reference you'd find it hard to get another situation in the Street."

"Well, I ain't stuck on Mr. Judson, but I don't believe he's mean enough to stand in the way of my getting another job if he did choose to bounce me for defending you against the undesirable attentions of that one-eyed lawyer upstairs. I'd show him up if he did."

"No, Bob; I don't want you to take any such risk on my account."

"But I won't stand for having you continually pestered by Christopher Bunny."

The offices of Stinson and Judson were on the same floor, so that Bob often met his sister going to or coming from lunch.

This day he met her going out as he was returning to his office after delivering a message at the Mills Building.

He saw right away that she had been crying, and, of course, wanted to learn what was the trouble.

It wasn't the first time she had told him about the persistent and undesirable attentions forced upon her by Mr. Christopher Bunny, the lawyer, who had an office on the floor above.

His age was anywhere between fifty-five and sixty, but he tried to appear very much younger.

He wore garments of a fashionable cut, carried a light gold-headed cane, and was an antiquated dude in his general make-up and bearing.

Apparently he had taken a great fancy to Carrie Seymour, and the bright and pretty girl couldn't shake him off, notwithstanding that she offered him no encouragement whatever and, as a rule, was positively chilly in her deportment toward him.

Bob Seymour was one of the brightest boys in the Wall Street district.

During office hours he always attended strictly to business, and Mr. Judson never had any particular fault to find with him.

This was saying a great deal, for the broker was something of a crank, and noted for yanking his clerks over the coals upon the slightest pretext.

The general impression in the office was that Judson was badly troubled with dyspepsia.

Bob and his sister lived with their widowed mother in a quiet Brooklyn street not far from the Bridge entrance.

Mr. Seymour had been a carpenter and contractor, but he died comparatively poor, so that after his death the support of the family was shifted to the shoulders of the two children, and they met the issue bravely.

Bob's particular friend was Howard King, who was employed as messenger by Mr. Stinson.

King lived in Brooklyn, too, not far from Bob's home, so that the two boys were nearly always together outside of business hours.

Howard was an only child, and after he got acquainted

with the Seymours he often wished he had a sister like his friend Bob.

He made up for the deficiency by making himself as agreeable as he could to Carrie Seymour.

As he was a gentlemanly boy, of good habits, he found no difficulty in impressing himself favorably upon Carrie's notice, and the two got along very nicely together.

He had noticed the persistency with which Mr. Bunny intruded upon his employer's stenographer, but, as Carrie never said anything to him on the subject, he didn't feel that he had any right even to mention the matter to Bob.

Had she stood in need of a protector, he would have been the first to have volunteered his services.

The appearance of Mortimer Judson in the corridor, with a jaundiced look on his countenance, terminated the interview between Bob Seymour and his sister.

She continued on to her lunch, while her brother hastened to enter his office.

Mr. Judson had found himself on the wrong side of a stock investment that morning, which had depleted his bank account to some extent, and he was in a particularly bad humor.

To make the matter worse, Edward Stinson, whom he didn't like, was on the winning side in the same stock deal.

He had fondly hoped to squeeze Stinson out of a few thousands, and his disappointment was great.

He had observed the triumphant smile on Stinson's face at the Stock Exchange, and that didn't improve his feelings any.

"What do you mean by loitering away your time in the corridor?" he snapped out, when Bob followed him into his private office.

The boy was rather surprised at this call-down, but he answered, politely:

"I was talking to my sister, sir."

"Don't you see enough of her at home?" snarled the broker, flinging his coat and hat at his messenger to hang up.

"She had something special to tell me, and I didn't think there was any harm in listening to her," replied Bob, respectfully.

The broker made no answer, but slammed a package of bonds down on his desk with force enough to make the ink fly up in his inkstand.

"Tell Mr. Brown I want to see him at once," he said, sharply.

"Yes, sir. Here is the answer to the note you gave me to deliver at the Mills Building."

"Why don't you put it on the desk?" cried Mr. Judson.

Bob was about to do so, when his employer snatched it out of his hand, tore it open and read it with a deep frown.

The boy hurried out to notify the cashier that the boss wanted to see him.

"He's in a pretty bad humor, Mr. Brown," he remarked, after he had delivered his message.

"That's nothing unusual," answered the cashier, dropping his pen and hurrying into the private office, whence



presently issued the broker's voice, pitched in a high key of anger.

"I never saw Judson in a worse humor," muttered Bob, as he took up a copy of a Wall Street daily and began to look over the previous day's quotations.

The tip had made the circuit of the counting-room, and all the clerks, including Miss Parker, the stenographer, were almost shaking in their shoes, for the broker was not in the habit of mincing his words when he had anything to say to them.

There was one thing in Mr. Judson's favor—he paid his employees well, and none of them cared to lose their jobs.

Mr. Stinson, on the contrary, paid his help as little as he could get them to work for, but, to make up for it, was remarkably pleasant to them, even when the market went against him, which, however, wasn't often, as Stinson was as foxy as they come.

Stinson did quite a mail-order business, which gave Carrie considerable work to attend to, often obliging her to work overtime, for which she got no extra pay, but lots of promises from her employer that he would take care of her.

The promises didn't materialize, much to the girl's disgust.

Judson sneered at Stinson's method of doing business, which was no secret in the Street, while Stinson made occasional references to Judson's irascible disposition.

Neither spoke to the other, except when business compelled it, on which occasion Judson, who was a big man, nearly always tried to pick a quarrel with his business rival; but such an unpleasant issue was always evaded by Stinson, who was a small man, with great diplomacy, no doubt from politic reasons.

While Bob was engaged with the paper, Mr. Brown came out of the private office with a very red face.

The boy felt sorry for the cashier, for he had to face the brunt of his employer's ill humor.

Mr. Brown's disposition was meek, and, as he had a large family to support, he felt obliged to make the best of unpleasant circumstances.

As he passed through the reception-room, Bob's bell buzzed several times, like a swarm of angry bees, and he hastened to answer the call.

## CHAPTER II.

BOB HAS A RUN-IN WITH CHRISTOPHER BUNNY AND LOSES.

"Go up to Mr. Bunny's office, on the next floor, and tell him I want to see him right away," snapped Mr. Judson, glaring at his messenger.

"Yes, sir," replied Bob, briskly, turning around and making for the door.

He didn't lose a moment's time in mounting the stairs.

"Gee whizz! The old man is in a dandy humor to-day,"

he breathed. "Somebody besides Mr. Brown is likely to catch it hot before he goes home."

Christopher Bunny had two rooms on the floor above—an outer office, presided over by a tall, thin, shabby, genteel clerk named Muggins, and a small, red-headed boy, who answered to the name of Piggy O'Toole, and a private room where the lawyer received his clients.

Muggins was an uncommonly industrious person, solemn and non-committal of manner.

Piggy shirked work when he could, and was talkative and cheeky.

When Bob entered the outer office, Piggy was the only occupant of the place, the clerk having gone to lunch.

The red-headed boy was amusing himself by trying to stab a solitary fly which had just alighted on the corner of the clerk's desk.

"I'd like to see Mr. Bunny a moment," said Bob, stepping up to the railing which divided the room in two parts.

"What do yer want to see him for?" asked Piggy, pausing in his delightful recreation and turning a leering countenance at the visitor.

"That's my business," replied Bob, tartly, for he had no use for Piggy O'Toole.

"Well, yer can't see him, see?" answered Piggy, insultingly.

"Why can't I?" demanded Bob, angrily.

"'Cause yer can't," grinned Piggy, making another effort to transfix the poor fly.

"But I must see him, do you understand?" cried Bob, raising his voice so that it could be heard in the private office.

"How yer goin' to do it, when he ain't in?" chuckled Piggy, sitting down in the clerk's chair and putting his feet on the desk.

"Why didn't you say so at first?" said Bob, feeling like jumping the railing and shaking the lawyer's boy out of his clothes.

"'Cause yer didn't ask me," replied Piggy, coolly taking a cigarette from his pocket, lighting it and puffing away as if he was the boss of the place.

"What you need is a good dressing down, Piggy O'Toole, and for two cents I'd come in there and give it to you," said Bob, who was hot under the collar.

"Aw, cut it out!" retorted Piggy. "Youse make me tired."

Bob vaulted the railing in a twinkling and had his hand on Piggy's collar, when the door opened and Mr. Bunny entered the office.

"Wh-what's this? What does this mean?" exclaimed the lawyer, holding up his gold-headed cane aghast.

"He's assaultin' me, sir," gasped Piggy, breaking away from Bob and dropping the half-consumed cigarette into the cuspidor.

"I brought a message for you, Mr. Bunny, and this boy of yours——" began Bob.

"Very well," replied the lawyer, testily. "You brought a message, you say—from Mr. Judson, I suppose. You're his messenger."



"He wishes to see you in his office right away."

"I will be down in a moment. Your name is Bob Seymour, I think," added the lawyer, screwing his ancient features into a friendly smile.

"Yes," replied the boy, shortly.

"And that's your sister who is stenographer for Mr. Stinson, eh?"

"Yes, it is," answered Bob, coldly.

"A most engaging young person—quite charming, upon my word."

"Sir!" cried the lad, flashing a look at the lawyer that should have warned him of impending trouble.

"I said she was a very charming young person—your sister, don't you know. I have—ahem!—taken quite a fancy to her. You might tell her so."

"My sister would take it as a favor if you wouldn't notice her hereafter."

"Wh—what's that?" ejaculated the lawyer, evidently much surprised.

"I said my sister would prefer that you leave her alone after this. I hope that is plain English," cried Bob, angrily.

"Why, what do you mean?"

"I mean just what I said. You annoy her with attentions which are not desirable, so you'd better cut them out."

"You're an impertinent little jackanapes!" snorted Mr. Bunny, growing white with rage.

"Thank you. You're a gentleman—I don't think," replied Bob, making for the door.

"You puppy, you!" sputtered the lawyer, furiously. "How dare you address such insulting language to me?"

Bob paused with his hand on the knob and regarded him scornfully.

"If you consider I've insulted you, you're welcome to that opinion. I simply want you to understand that I won't permit you to bother my sister at her work with your unwelcome attentions. You're old enough to know better. She doesn't want to have anything to do with you."

"She doesn't?" sneered Mr. Bunny, a nasty look coming into his face.

"No, she doesn't."

"She ought to consider herself highly honored by my noticing her. What is she, anyway?" leeringly. "Why——"

That was as far as he got, for Bob turned upon him quick as a flash of lightning and struck him full in the face, knocking him into a heap against the railing.

"Take that, you fossilized dude, and the next time you say a word against my sister in my presence I'll knock you into the middle of next week."

The boy slammed the door behind him and went downstairs.

When Bob re-entered the reception-room of his own office he found he had skinned his knuckles, and he went out to the lavatory to wash them.

While he was there, Mr. Bunny rushed into the office like a small cyclone and, without the formality of knocking, dashed into Mr. Judson's private office.

In about one minute the broker's bell buzzed furiously.

"You're wanted in the office," said one of the clerks, looking in at the washroom.

"All right," replied Bob, coolly.

He answered the summons with more deliberation than was his wont, much to the surprise of the clerks, who, had they been wanted, would have tumbled over themselves in their haste to reach the private room.

He found, as he expected, the lawyer with his employer, and easily guessed that a storm was about to burst on his devoted head.

Mr. Judson was white with anger.

"Did you strike Mr. Bunny in his office a few moments ago?" he demanded.

"I did. He——"

"That'll do. You're discharged. Go to the cashier and get your wages, and then clear out. Don't let me see you around here again."

"I should like to explain——" began Bob.

"I don't want to hear another word from you. Get out of the office."

"All right. If you won't listen, you won't. I should like a recommendation, sir."

"What's that?" gasped Mr. Judson, almost paralyzed at what he considered the nerve of his late messenger.

"I should like you to furnish me with a recommendation, sir," repeated the boy, coolly.

The broker almost frothed at the mouth with rage, and finally said something that wouldn't look well in print.

"Get out before I kick you out," he roared, swinging about in his chair, whereupon Bob thought it prudent to retire as gracefully as he could.

"I'll take my week's wages, Mr. Brown," he said, stepping up to the cashier's window a few minutes later, with his hat and coat on.

"Why, what does this mean?" asked Mr. Brown, in surprise.

"Mr. Judson has decided he has no further use for my valuable services," replied Bob, calmly. "So he told me to get my money and do the 23 act."

"The deuce he did!" replied the cashier, with a look of sympathy. "I'm very sorry to hear it, for I like you, Bob."

"Thank you, sir. The feeling is reciprocated."

"Judson must be in an awful state of mind to-day," said the cashier, apprehensively.

"This affair has nothing to do with the office."

"Hasn't it? Why——"

"He sent me upstairs with a message to Bunny, the lawyer. That old fossil has lately been making a practice of annoying my sister, who works for Stinson, you know. Well, I gave him a calling down for it, as he referred to my sister in terms I didn't like, and I knocked him down. He rushed down and told Mr. Judson, and that's why I'm out of a job."

"I'm afraid you were a little rash, Bob," replied the cashier, counting out the boy's wages.

"Perhaps; but I'm Carrie's protector, and anybody who says a word against her is up against me."



"It was unfortunate," said Mr. Brown. "What are you going to do?"

"Look up another position, I suppose."

"I hope you'll find one right away."

"Thank you, Mr. Brown. Good-bye."

He then bade all the clerks and the typewriter good-bye and left the office

### CHAPTER III.

#### IN WHICH BOB MAKES THE ACQUAINTANCE OF JOHN BAXTER.

The first person Bob saw when he came out into the corridor was Piggy O'Toole.

That cheeky individual, suspecting that Seymour was about to get it in the neck for assaulting his boss, had made it his business to be on hand to witness Bob's retirement from Judson's office and to gloat over the fact.

"Lost yer job, have yer?" grinned Piggy, maliciously, as soon as he saw Seymour.

Bob grabbed him by the neck and the slack of his trousers and made him walk Spanish to the foot of the stairs leading to the next floor.

"Now, get up to your den, before I dust your jacket for you," he said, giving the little imp a shove.

"Yah! Yer big stiff!" retorted Piggy, after placing half the stairway between them. "I'm glad yer bounced. Yer ain't no good. Me boss ought to have youse pulled in for hittin' him. Don't ask me for the loan of a nickel if yer get hard up, 'cause yer won't get nuttin', see?"

Bob made a bluff to chase him, and Piggy immediately took to his heels and disappeared.

"What's the trouble, Bob?" asked a cheery voice behind him at that moment. "What's Piggy been doing to you?"

Bob turned to find Howard King at his elbow.

"Giving me cheek, as usual," replied Seymour, accompanying his friend down to the street.

"He's a hard case," replied Howard, with a laugh. "I stood him on his head this morning for giving me back talk, but it won't cure him. It's bred in his bone. I wonder Mr. Bunny tolerates him."

"He's good enough for that old fossil. Now, don't fall down, old chap, when I tell you something. I've just been bounced."

"You've been what?" gasped Howard, starting back in dismay.

"Fired."

"Go on. You're joking," said his friend, with an incredulous stare.

"Honest injun."

"Is that really a fact?"

"It is."

"Why, I thought Judson couldn't get along without you. I heard Stinson say you were too good for him."

"Stinson just said that to get a crack at Judson. Those two are always knocking each other."

"What did Judson bounce you for?"

"Because Bunny asked him to."

"You don't mean it?"

"I do."

"Why did Bunny want you discharged?"

"Because I knocked him down."

"You knocked Mr. Bunny down?" in astonishment.

"I did. He's been annoying Carrie for some time, and I thought I'd put a stop to it."

"Great Scott! I don't see how you could do it, though I guess he deserved it. Every time he came into our office for the past month he'd make a bee-line for your sister's desk. I wondered how she could put up with it. I felt like laying him out myself, two or three times, but, of course, I had no right to interfere."

"It's a good thing for you that you didn't. Bunny would have made Stinson fire you."

"If he had really insulted your sister I would have taken those chances, bet your life! I wouldn't stand for anything like that. If I had a sister I'd expect you to do the same thing, if necessary."

"Thanks, old man. I know you'd stand by Carrie, just the same as I would," said Bob, grasping his chum by the hand.

"To be sure I would."

Bob walked up the street with King and told him the story of his brief run-in with the lawyer.

"So Judson wouldn't give you a recommend, eh? Well, Stinson will, if only to get back at your late boss. Shall I tell him you've been discharged?"

"I'm thinking Bunny will tell him. I wouldn't be surprised if he'll try to get my sister out of her job, too, out of revenge, you know."

"If I hear of him trying such a game I'll bust him in the snoot!" cried King, indignantly.

"And then you'll get fired," laughed Bob.

"Who cares? It will be in a good cause."

"Don't do anything rash, Howard. One of us at a time is enough to be out on his uppers."

The boys parted at the corner of Broadway, after Bob had cautioned his friend not to say anything to Carrie about his losing his job.

Bob hadn't had his lunch, so he stepped in at the nearest restaurant and had a sandwich, a cup of coffee and a piece of pie.

Then he walked up as far as the post-office.

Some men were repairing the pavement below where the Third Avenue cars loop the loop, and Bob stopped to watch them.

Happening to look up, he saw a man with a wide soft-brimmed hat and clad in a new suit of clothes leave the sidewalk near the corner of Ann Street and Park Row and start across the street, apparently bound for the post-office.

At that very moment a car came swinging around the curve at a rattling good pace.

The motorman for a moment turned to glance backward into the car, and consequently did not notice the man he was bearing down on.



The man himself did not seem to be aware of the nearness of the car.

Of the hundred or more persons in the immediate neighborhood the only one who saw the impending tragedy was Bob.

"Good gracious!" he exclaimed. "The man will be killed."

Acting on the spur of the moment, he dashed forward, grabbed the stranger by the arm and pulled him back just as the whizzing car brushed them both aside.

The end of the car struck the man a glancing blow, and he went down, dragging his brave young rescuer with him.

A dozen people who had observed Bob's gallant act rushed forward and assisted them to their feet.

"That was a mighty close call you had, sir," said a gentleman in a silk hat. "If it hadn't been for this boy you would have been under the wheels."

"I guess I would," admitted the stranger, beginning to realize the narrow shave he had had for his life. "Young man, you've been uncommonly good to me, and I shan't forget it."

"Don't mention it," replied Bob, cheerfully.

"Well, I guess I will mention it. Come, let's cut loose from this crowd and get over to the post-office, where I'm bound," and seizing the boy by the arm he led him away from the small mob which was beginning to congregate about them. "I'm a stranger in New York," continued the man, whose face was sunburned and tanned by the weather. "Only arrived in town last night, and I'm stopping at the Astor House."

They stepped onto the broad walk in front of the main entrance to the post-office.

"You're not in a hurry, are you?" asked the stranger. "Because I'd like to have a talk with you."

"No," replied Bob. "I'm in no particular hurry."

"Then step inside with me till I see if there's any letters for me at the general delivery window."

He gave his name as John Baxter at the window, but there was nothing for him.

"What is your name, my lad?" he asked his companion.

"Bob Seymour."

"Well, I'm glad to know you, Bob. Mine is Baxter, John Baxter, as you heard me tell the clerk at the window. You're a brave boy to take the risk you did to help a total stranger."

"You don't suppose I could look on and see you run down, do you, sir?" asked Bob.

"But you might have been drawn under the wheels yourself if you hadn't yanked me away just in the nick of time."

"I didn't really think about such a thing, Mr. Baxter. I simply saw a bare chance of saving you and acted upon it. Fortunately I was successful."

"You seem to be the only one of all that crowd of people who noticed me, or, at least, made an effort to save me. It takes rare courage and presence of mind to do as you did, and there's no one appreciates that fact more than me. Might I ask where you are employed?"

"I'm not working at present. I lost my job as a Wall

Street messenger this afternoon because I resented an insult to my sister."

"That's too bad," replied the man, sympathetically. "You're well acquainted with Wall Street, then?"

"Sure. I know it like a book."

"Then maybe you wouldn't mind showing me to the office of a Wall Street lawyer I have arranged to call upon?"

"I'll do it with pleasure. What's his name?"

"His name is—let me see," and he pulled an envelope out of an inner pocket. "Ah, yes, his name is Christopher Bunny, No. — Wall Street."

"Why, that's the man whom I had the run-in with about my sister, and who got me discharged in consequence."

"You don't say!" said the stranger, with a whistle of astonishment.

## CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH HOWARD KING TAKES CARRIE SEYMOUR'S PART.

"I'll take you down to Wall Street and show you his office, as you want to go there," said Bob.

"Hold on, my lad. What kind of person is this Christopher Bunny?" asked Mr. Baxter, with evident interest.

Bob described his outward appearance.

"Kind of dude, isn't he? What is his reputation as a lawyer?"

"Sharp and slick," replied the boy.

"Sharp and slick," repeated the Westerner, thoughtfully. "Sounds kind of dangerous. I'm afraid of lawyers, as a rule, especially the sharp and slick kind. Always puts me in mind of the fable where the lawyers got the oyster and the clients the shells. Well, you can pilot the way, and I'll call upon this chap. After I size him up I'll decide whether it's safe for me to do business with him."

Bob went as far as the entrance to the building, and then directed Mr. Baxter to the third floor back.

"Thanks, my lad. Now, I want you to dine with me at the Astor House to-night. As you've lost your position, I'm going to see if I can't put you in the way of doing something that'll put the dollars into your pocket."

"That's what I'm looking for, Mr. Baxter," laughed Bob.

"That's what we're all looking for these days," chuckled the Westerner. "You will meet me in the reading-room of the hotel at seven o'clock, won't you?"

"Yes, sir; if you wish me to."

"Certainly I do. You've done me a great favor, and I want to acknowledge it in some substantial way. I am sure I can put you in the way of making a good deal more money than you were getting as an office messenger."

With these words they parted, Bob taking a stroll down Broad Street to pass away the time till three o'clock, when he expected Howard, and perhaps his sister, would be free for the day.

His leisurely stride, so different from his customary rapid



locomotion, attracted the attention of the janitor of a big office building who knew him.

"Hello, Seymour," he said, grasping him by the arm, "you seem to be taking the world easy all of a sudden. Anything the matter with your shoe leather, or are you going into business for yourself and are inspecting the neighborhood with the view of picking out a suitable office? If you are, we've got just what you want—a back office on the steenth floor, just vacated, with a safe, rug and all the furniture complete. It's a bargain at three hundred dollars per annum, payable monthly, in advance. What do you say?" and the man grinned all over his face.

"Thanks, old man," laughed Bob. "I'll keep your offer in mind."

"Better take it now, if you want it. It may be gone to-morrow," chuckled the janitor.

"Sorry, but I'll have to consult my partner, Mr. Rocker-bilt, first," and he passed on, leaving the janitor to snicker over his joke.

At three o'clock Bob was hovering about the vicinity of his late office.

In fifteen minutes he saw Howard King come out and look up and down the street.

He whistled to him, and his chum crossed the way to meet him.

Haven't looked for another job yet, have you?" he asked, interestedly.

"No. But I have something on the string that may pan out to my advantage," whereupon he related the adventure he had had in front of the post-office through which he had become acquainted with Mr. John Baxter. "I've got a date to dine with him at the Astor House to-night, and he's promised to do something for me," concluded the boy.

"Well, he ought to, after what you did for him. Does he look as if he had any money?"

"Looks don't always count. He's from the West, and the new suit he's got on fits him kind of strangely—just as if he wasn't used to wearing such things. He is as brown as a berry, and I should say he's been working out somewhere in the mining districts."

"I see."

"He's got some kind of legal business on hand, for he wants a lawyer."

"Why didn't you recommend him to your friend Bunny?" chuckled Howard.

"Because somebody else had done that already."

"What do you mean?" asked his friend, in surprise.

"He had a letter in his possession addressed to Mr. Christopher Bunny."

"Yes, he did?" answered Howard, incredulously.

"Well, he did, all right."

"Do you mean it?" astonished.

"Sure I mean it. I brought him down to the building and showed him where Bunny's office was."

"Well, if Bunny gets him in tow he'll squeeze him dry before he lets him go. You know what Bunny is. You ought to have warned him."

"He asked me what Bunny's reputation was, and I told

him sharp and slick, so if he gets pinched it's his own fault. Now, Howard, I want you to run back to your office and tell Carrie I won't be home to supper to-night, as I've an engagement to dine with a man at the Astor House."

"All right, old man; but won't she think it funny?"

"Perhaps."

"She'll be sure to question me about it. What'll I say?"

"Nothing. All you know is that I asked you to deliver that message. She hasn't heard I'm out of Judson's, has she?"

"No; I guess not."

Well, run along. Then you can meet me at the corner of Nassau Street.

Howard King returned to Stinson's with his message.

As he reached the corridor he saw Christopher Bunny come downstairs and make a bee-line for Stinson's office.

At the same moment Carrie Seymour, with her hat and jacket on, came out at the door.

The lawyer walked right up to her and said something.

She made some reply, and then attempted to brush by him, but he headed her off.

"I should be pleased to have you dine with me, Miss Seymour," the lawyer said, with what he intended to be an engaging smile.

"Sir!" exclaimed the girl, indignantly.

"Your brother insulted me to-day, for which conduct Mr. Judson discharged him. But for your sake I shall intercede for him and get him taken back."

"My brother discharged!" she gasped.

"Don't worry, Miss Seymour. Remember, I'm your friend," he said, with a simper. "I have influence with Mr. Judson. He'll do anything to oblige me. I assure you I can easily persuade him to reinstate your brother. I trust, therefore, you will permit me the pleasure of your company at dinner and the honor of seeing you to your home afterward."

"I beg you will let me pass, Mr. Bunny. You ought to know better than to make such a request of me. You have no right to force your attentions on me. I don't want anything to do with you."

"Miss Seymour, surely——"

"Will you let me by, sir?" she demanded, with an angry flash in her eyes.

"Think of your brother, Miss Seymour," purred the lawyer. "Unless I interfere in his behalf——"

Carrie made no reply, but made another attempt to escape from the legal persecutor, which he deftly blocked.

Howard King, from the shadow of the stairway, had been an impatient observer of the interview, and his blood began to boil when he saw that Christopher Bunny was clearly bent on forcing Carrie Seymour to listen to him, whether she would or not.

When he deliberately placed himself in her path for the third time Howard concluded it was time for him to interfere.

So he walked right up to them.

"Oh, Howard, please take me downstairs," she cried, the moment she saw him.



"Certainly, Miss Carrie, with pleasure," and he stepped brusquely between the girl and the lawyer.

Christopher Bunny glared at him angrily.

"What do you mean, boy, by interfering between this young lady and myself?"

"You heard what she said, didn't you?" replied Howard, coolly.

"Get out of the way, you jackanapes! How dare you address me in that tone?"

Howard looked at him scornfully, then, turning to the girl, said:

"This way, Miss Carrie."

Christopher Bunny worked himself into a rage on seeing that his carefully matured plan was about to miss fire.

"I'll see that you're discharged to-morrow, you puppy," he cried, furiously, striking the boy on the shoulder with his cane.

Howard, who had had it in for the lawyer some time, to which was added the knowledge that he was responsible for his friend's discharge that afternoon, threw prudence to the winds, and, turning suddenly on Mr. Bunny, gave him a punch on the chest that sent him staggering back against the wall.

Then taking Carrie by the arm, he escorted her downstairs to the street.

"Oh, Howard, you'll get into trouble for that," she said, apprehensively.

"I don't care," replied her protector, recklessly. "I won't permit Bunny or anybody else to annoy you."

She flashed him a grateful look.

"I shall be so sorry if Mr. Stinson takes notice of what you have just done."

"Don't worry about me. I can look out for myself," replied Howard, proudly.

"Has Bob really been discharged?" she asked, with tears in her eyes.

"I am sorry to say he has. He had a racket over you with Mr. Bunny, and the old dude rushed down to Judson and got him fired."

"The hateful old thing!" she cried, indignantly.

"He's a pretty fierce proposition."

"He will certainly complain about you to Mr. Stinson to-morrow," she said, laying her hand on his arm sympathetically.

"Well, let him. I don't believe he'll be able to influence the boss. Well, I must tell you what brought me back. Bob told me to tell you that he won't be home to supper."

"Why not?" she asked, opening her eyes in surprise.

"A gentleman, who has promised to do something for him in a business way, has invited him to dine with him at the Astor House."

"Isn't that nice?" she exclaimed, brightening up.

"I think so. Bob is a lucky boy to fall into something so soon after getting discharged from Judson's. All I can say is, Judson is a fool. He won't get such a good messenger again in a hurry."

At the corner of Nassau Street Bob joined them.

"Hello, sis," he said. "I didn't expect to see you so

soon; that's why I sent Howard up to tell you I shouldn't be home till some time in the evening."

"I'm glad you sent him. He was just in time to save me from that horrid Mr. Bunny," and she gave her brother an outline of the affair.

"Gee whizz!" cried Bob. "So you handed him out a crack, too, did you, Howard? I'm afraid I see your finish to-morrow."

"I'm not worrying about it," replied King, lightly. "I don't get so much at Stinson's that I'm stuck on the job."

The boys escorted Carrie to the bridge cars, and during the walk Bob told her how he had got acquainted with Mr. Baxter.

Howard kept Bob company until half-past six, when they separated, King going home and Bob to the Astor House.

## CHAPTER V

IN WHICH DAME FORTUNE FLIRTS WITH SEYMOUR.

"Well, my lad, I see you're on time," said John Baxter, the man from the West, as Bob stepped up to him in the reading-room of the Astor House.

"Yes, sir. I always try to keep my engagements."

"They say promptness is a virtue, Bob," replied the Westerner, clapping the boy familiarly on the shoulder. "Well, let's go in to dinner."

During the meal Mr. Baxter informed Bob that he had seen Christopher Bunny.

"The lawyer was expecting me, having received word from the party who gave me the letter of introduction that I was coming on. He's a pretty smooth talker, Bob, and I'll warrant he's as sharp as a new razor. I don't fancy him, though I didn't tell him so, of course. He expects me to call to-morrow, but I don't think I will. I've got a lot of first-class Western mining stock I want to sell, and he says he'll introduce me to a broker that will handle it all right."

"That'll be either Stinson or Judson."

"You've been working for Judson, I think you said."

"Yes."

"Well, I've an idea that I hope will work, as it's for your benefit as well as my own," said Mr. Baxter, beaming upon his young guest. "How long have you been working in Wall Street?"

"Nearly three years, sir."

"You ought to know the ropes pretty well."

"I think I do, sir."

"Are you pretty well acquainted with Stock Exchange methods?"

"Yes, sir. I've been studying the market pretty closely for the past year, as I mean to be a broker myself one of these days, if I ever get enough capital to make a start."

"Come, now, that's encouraging," said the Westerner, looking at the boy with a fresh interest. "Have you ever done any speculating yourself?"



"A little, sir. "I've got a hundred dollars in the bank I cleaned up on a couple of small ventures this year, and I've been on the lookout to double it, but haven't seen a safe chance yet to do so."

"You're a bright boy, Bob. That's why I kind of cottoned to you right off, not speaking of what I owe you for saving my life, as I feel confident you did. Now, Bob, supposing I fitted you out with an office, do you think you could do any business?"

"I'm sure I could, if I got a customer or two to begin with," replied the boy, eagerly.

"Well, I propose to be your first customer, and I ought to be a good one, as I have many thousands of shares of stock listed on the Goldfield and San Francisco markets that I want to dispose of."

"If they're good stocks I can sell them all right."

"As well as any of the regular brokers?" smiled Mr. Baxter.

"Yes, sir."

"That's all I want to know. Bob, you shall be my broker."

"Do you mean that, sir?" asked Seymour, hardly believing his ears.

"I certainly do. In addition, I'm going to give you a chance to make a stake for yourself, besides. As a slight acknowledgment of the debt I owe you I'm going to present you with a block of five thousand shares of Bullfrog-Denver, worth to-day one dollar per share. You're at liberty to sell it as soon as you feel like it and use the money as your working capital."

"But, Mr. Baxter, I don't want you to give me all that stock," protested Bob. "A thousand shares would be lots. I'm perfectly satisfied to have you start me in business as your broker, for my commissions will probably pay me well."

"I can't cut the block up, even if I would. You must take the five thousand shares. I can easily afford the gift, which is little enough, considering what I owe you."

"I don't know how to thank you, sir."

"Then don't try to do so and you will please me better."

"You're very liberal."

"Oh, I haven't got through with you yet, Bob," laughed the Westerner. "Have you heard about Palmetto, the new mining district of Southern Nevada?"

"I've read about it in the papers, sir. There's another one called Manhattan, too."

"That's right. I see you keep abreast of the times. A great amount of attention has been diverted to those districts during the past few weeks, which shows that they are rapidly springing into prominence. I've been right on the ground, so I can tell you something about them. In my opinion, they're going to knock Goldfield and Bullfrog in the shade, and even give some of the best Tonopah mines a run for their money. I am largely interested in Palmetto claims myself. Read that, Bob," and he handed the boy a clipping from the Goldfield Review of February 20.

Bob took it and read as follows:

"If the encouraging reports coming in almost daily from

the Palmetto country are borne out by facts—and there is little doubt but they are—the name Palmetto will soon have as magical a charm as have Tonopah, Goldfield and the rest of Nevada's mining camps."

"Here's another," said Mr. Baxter, passing it over, and Bob read: "Not less than a dozen of our wanderers have returned from Palmetto, some to recuperate from their labors and others to procure supplies and implements. Some of these have gone back and the rest are preparing to go. But all are of the same opinion, namely, that Palmetto, with its wonderful deposit of mineral, is the coming wonder of wonders."

"It must be a great place," said Bob, with sparkling eyes.

"Great! Why, Bob, Palmetto will turn out more Monte Cristos than any mining camp yet discovered in the great West."

"Then your chance of becoming a Monte Cristo is good," grinned the boy.

"Bob, I'm a half-owner in the Golden Dream Mine in the Palmetto district, about twenty miles south of Goldfield. It comprises forty acres—that is, two claims. A few days before I left for the East, ore which pans and assays as high as twenty thousand dollars to the ton was opened up. The ledge from which such phenomenal values are being obtained is about five feet in width and was uncovered at a depth of twenty-five feet. The high-grade streak was two inches in width and lay along the foot-wall of the vein. There is also a twelve-inch streak of fine shipping ore which shows free gold in both cubes and spirals. The quartz is a milky white in color and forms an attractive background for the rich luster of the precious metal."

"I wouldn't mind owning an interest in that mine," said Bob, eagerly.

"Only a few thousand shares were sold at the outset for development purposes. They were eagerly taken at five cents a share, and I doubt if their present owners would dispose of them at any figure, notwithstanding that the mine has not yet been listed on the Western exchanges. Now, Bob, in addition to that block of Bullfrog-Denver, which has a tangible market value of one dollar per share, I'm going to make you a present of one thousand shares of Golden Dream."

"Are you trying to make a millionaire of me?" laughed the boy, with flushed face.

As the par value of the shares is one hundred dollars, you may consider yourself the tenth part of a millionaire on paper," smiled Mr. Baxter. "But, coming down to facts, I think that stock will be worth over ten dollars per share on the market before the year is out, and eventually I should not be surprised if it went to over twenty-five or thirty dollars."

"I think Christopher Bunny did me a favor to-day by having me bounced from my job. If he hadn't, I shouldn't have met you."

"And if you hadn't, I should now be either in the hospital or the morgue. Well, let's go up to my room, and I will let you have that stock."



Bob followed the man from the West out of the dining-room and up to the desk, where he asked the clerk for a tin box which was in the office safe.

His room was on the third floor, and an elevator took them quickly there.

Unlocking the box, Mr. Baxter took out package after package of mining stock.

After selecting the certificate of five thousand shares of Bullfrog-Denver, and a certificate of five thousand shares of Golden Dream, both made out in the name of John Baxter, he returned the rest to the box and relocked it.

"There you are, Bob," he said, placing the two certificates in a long white envelope and handing it to the boy. "The Denver you can realize five thousand dollars on tomorrow, if you choose. As to the Golden Dream, take my advice and hold on to it like grim death. There's a fortune in it for you in the future, as sure as my name is John Baxter."

"I am very grateful to you, sir, for your liberality, and I assure you that as your broker your interests will be my first consideration," said Bob, quite overpowered by the streak of luck which had come to him.

"Well," laughed Mr. Baxter, "I may say that I shall have the utmost confidence in you, which is more than I could say with reference to any broker introduced to me by Mr. Christopher Bunny, whom I heartily distrust. I am satisfied he has been informed about the uncommon prospects of the Golden Dream, and that it is his purpose to get in on the ground floor with the promoters, of which I am one, if he can. I apprehend that he will be disappointed. Golden Dream stock is not for sale just at present. You are one of the lucky ones, Bob. You have not only come in on the ground floor, but by the cellar window, for the one thousand shares haven't cost you a cent."

"For which I have to thank you, sir."

"Say rather the courage and presence of mind you exhibited to-day in front of the post-office," smiled Mr. Baxter. "Now, Bob, you must rent an office to-morrow in the Wall Street district, have it fitted up, and then notify me at the hotel here as soon as you are ready to do business. Have you money enough to do that? If not, I will loan you some," and the mine owner took out his pocketbook.

"I've a hundred dollars," said Bob.

"Well, here's another. You can deduct it from your commission account."

"Thank you, sir," replied Bob, accepting the money, and soon after he took his leave of Mr. Baxter and went home in high glee.

## CHAPTER VI.

IN WHICH BOB SEYMOUR HIRES AN OFFICE IN WALL STREET.

It was close on to ten o'clock when Bob Seymour reached home.

He found his mother and sister sewing in the dining-room of their little flat.

"Howard has just gone," said Carrie, as he took off his overcoat. "He spent the evening with us."

"I suppose you kept him well employed," replied Bob, with a grin.

"Why, what do you mean, you silly boy?"

"You usually make him hold your worsted or something of that sort while you wind it up."

"The idea! Did you ever hear anything like that, mother?" cried Carrie, with a rosy blush.

"You've been dining out with a gentleman, I understand, my son?" said his mother, looking at him inquiringly.

"Yes; I took dinner with Mr. John Baxter, a Western mine owner, at the Astor House," he answered, with a glowing face, for he was just bubbling over with eagerness to impart the news of his good fortune to the dear ones at home.

"At the Astor House!" mimicked Carrie. "Aren't we some!"

"I presume you had a good time, Robert," said Mrs. Seymour, but her son could see there was a troubled look on her gentle features. "I am sorry to hear that you lost your position with Mr. Judson. I'm afraid you acted indiscreetly in attacking that lawyer, my son."

"He's been making life miserable for Carrie for the last month, mother, and as good as insulted her before me. You don't suppose I could stand for that, do you?" cried Bob, his eyes sparkling with indignation.

"I am not blaming you for defending your sister, but you know the easiest way is always the best."

"There are exceptions to every rule, mother."

The little, pleasant-faced mother shook her head as if she didn't agree with him.

"It was very unfortunate, Robert. You know how I depend on your wages as well as Carrie's. She gets very little for the work she does."

"I agree with you there, mother. Stinson is a stingy old hunk. He doesn't half pay his employees. But don't worry about my wages. You shall have all the money you need."

"Have you got another position?" asked Carrie, looking up quickly, and searching his face for a favorable indication.

"I've got something better than that," replied Bob, with a thrill of exultation in his tone which did not escape mother and daughter, who regarded him expectantly.

"What have you got, Bob?" asked Carrie, eagerly.

"Did you tell mother how I saved Mr. Baxter from being run over by a Third Avenue car at the post-office loop this afternoon?"

"Certainly."

"Mr. Baxter is a big Western mine owner. Owns half of the Golden Dream Mine at the Palmetto diggings in Southern Nevada."

"Well?" said his sister, eagerly.

"He's brought on a box full of stock to sell here in the East."

"He must be wealthy."



"Well, if he isn't, all signs go for nothing. What do you suppose he gave me?"

"You don't mean to say that he made you a present?" cried Carrie, in a flutter of excitement.

"That's what he did," replied the boy, coolly.

"What was it?"

"Guess," tantalizingly.

"A gold watch and chain," she cried.

"Better than that."

"Five hundred dollars in money," she said, doubtfully.

"Better," laughed Bob.

"One thousand dollars," screamed Carrie, though she didn't believe any such thing.

"Keep on, and maybe you'll strike it right by and by."

"You ridiculous boy! Tell us what he gave you. You know I couldn't guess."

"Well, don't faint now when I tell you. He gave me five thousand shares of the Denver Mining Company, of Bullfrog, Nevada, worth one dollar per share."

The little mother looked her astonishment, while Carrie exclaimed:

"Bob Seymour, you don't mean it!"

The boy put his hand in his pocket and produced the envelope.

"Allow me to show you the certificate as evidence. We will call this exhibit No. 1," he remarked, gleefully, as he showed them both the engraved document.

"Oh, my! And is that really worth five thousand dollars?" exclaimed Carrie, incredulously.

"Taking Mr. Baxter's word for it, it is," answered Bob.

"Can you sell it for that amount?" she persisted.

"He says I can. The stock is not quoted on the New York Exchange, but on the Garfield and San Francisco exchanges."

"Why, you're a rich boy, aren't you?"

"That isn't all."

"Isn't all?" opening her eyes very wide.

"He presented me with a certificate of one thousand shares of the Golden Dream, a new mine, of Palmetto district, Nevada, the value of which cannot now be estimated, as it is yet unlisted, but which Mr. Baxter assures me is a coming bonanza."

"Good gracious!" cried Carrie, drawing a long breath of bewilderment. "Anything more coming?" with a roguish smile.

"Yes. I'm going into business as a stock broker, chiefly to sell Mr. Baxter's bunch of Western stocks as a start-off."

"Oh, come, now, Bob, you surely don't mean that?"

"Yes, I do."

"Mother, do you believe that?"

"Robert, aren't you just stretching the truth a little bit?"

"No, mother," replied the boy, so earnestly that she could no longer doubt him. "I am really going into business for myself."

"But you're not eighteen yet," cried his sister.

"That has nothing to do with it, sis. I'm going to hire an office to-morrow in some office building on Wall or Broad Street, and when I have had it fitted up you and mother

must call and see me, and maybe I'll take you out and blow you to a swell meal at Delmonico's."

"Oh, my, I wouldn't miss that for anything," laughed Carrie. "Don't you want to hire me for your stenographer? If you'll offer me more than I'm getting from Mr. Stinson, and guarantee me a steady position, I'll consider the offer," with twinkling eyes.

"I'm afraid I shan't have any use for a stenographer right away, but as soon as business warrants it, Carrie, you may be sure you'll hear from me."

"Won't Howard be surprised?"

"Don't say a word," grinned Bob. "I'm going to offer him a job as my messenger."

"You're not going to do any such thing," indignantly.

"Well, if he won't accept, perhaps I'll offer him a partnership."

"That's more like it. 'Seymour & King, the Boy Brokers of Wall Street.' That would sound fine," cried Carrie, clapping her hands.

"And one of these days I suppose you expect to go into partnership with him for life?" chuckled her brother.

"Aren't you awful!" and she hid her burning face in the red table cover.

"You shouldn't tease your sister so, Robert," said the little mother, shaking her finger at her stalwart son, of whom she was very proud, indeed.

Next morning Bob started out to hunt up a suitable office.

"I wonder if that Broad Street janitor was joking about that office in his building. If he wasn't, I'll give him the surprise of his life."

So he went down to the building in question and, running across the superintendent, asked him if there was a small office for rent in the building.

"I believe there are one or two. See the janitor."

He hunted the janitor up.

"I came to look at that office you were telling me about. Will you kindly take me up and let me examine it?"

"What are you giving me, Seymour?" grinned the man.

"I'm giving you nothing, Morrissey. If the office is anything like you describe it, I'm ready to take it and pay you three months' rent in advance."

"G'wan. You're joking."

"I never joke on matters of business. Are you going to show it to me?"

The janitor shook his head.

"All right; I'll see the agent."

Bob turned on his heel and sought the agent of the building, whose office was on the ground floor.

"Who do you represent?" asked the agent, after he had made his request.

"I want the office for myself."

"We don't rent offices in this building to boys," replied the man, shortly.

"I'll pay you six months' rent in advance," said Bob, flashing his wad before the agent's eyes, "and furnish satisfactory references as to my reliability."

The man hesitated.

"What business are you going to engage in?"



"Stock broker."

The agent stared at his applicant as if he thought he was making game of him.

"Young man, is this a joke of yours?" he asked, severely.

"No, sir," replied Bob, in a businesslike way.

The agent considered a moment, then said:

"Can you furnish security for a year's rent?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well," he answered, pushing a button.

In a few moments the janitor appeared.

"Show this young man the small office on the eighth floor. If he likes it, and is prepared to purchase the fittings at a fair valuation, with or without safe, send him back to me."

"Well, upon me word, you're a bird," exclaimed the janitor, as they made their way to the elevator. "Have you come into a boodle, and are trying to see how quick you can spend it?"

"What a good guesser you are, Morrissey!" grinned Bob.

"I thought you was a messenger for Judson?"

"Well, you've got another think coming, old man. Judson and I are now business rivals."

"You are? Upon me word, that's a good one."

In a few moments Bob had the opportunity to look at the office.

It was not very large, but still seemed big enough for his requirements.

It was furnished ready for immediate occupancy.

Morrissey said the former tenant had defaulted in his rent and the agent had levied on the furniture.

"I'll take it just as it is," said Bob, who then returned to the agent's office, gave his name and reference and plunked down one hundred dollars security.

"Call this afternoon," said the agent, "and if everything is satisfactory I will have a lease made out for one year."

Bob called at two o'clock and was informed that he could take immediate possession on paying a certain sum for the furnishings and furnishing a guarantee that the rent would be promptly paid for twelve months from date.

These conditions he met, and the key of the office was handed to him.

## CHAPTER VII.

### IN WHICH SEYMOUR TAKES A PARTNER.

Bob ran across Howard King at the corner of Broad and Wall Streets.

"I've just been aching to see you," said Howard. "Carrie told me you have run up against no end of good luck, and that you're going into business for yourself. Is that a fact?" looking at his friend almost enviously.

"She told you the truth, all right. I've hired an office, already furnished, in the Bullion Building, and am going

up Nassau Street to get a sign painter to put my name on the door."

"Gee whizz! You aren't losing any time. Yesterday you were a common, ordinary messenger like myself; to-day you're branching out as a real stock broker. I never heard of such hog luck."

"I hope you're not jealous, Howard, though I suppose it does hit you kind of hard."

"I'm not jealous, Bob. I wish you luck, old man. Only I wish I had a chance to go in with you. I'm going to quit Stinson Saturday."

"How's that? Get a call-down for what you did to Bunny?"

"I should say so. Stinson has given me till Saturday to make up my mind whether I'll apologize to the lawyer or take the bounce. As I don't intend to apologize, why, I'm going to leave."

"You mean that?"

"I do," replied Howard, in a determined tone.

"All right," said Bob, in a decisive tone. "Come in with me."

"As your messenger?"

"No, sir. As my partner."

"Go on. I wish I could," replied Howard, wistfully.

"Wish you could? Am I not making you the offer?"

"Sure you are; but I can't accept, for I haven't any money to speak of."

"How much have you got?"

"I might raise a couple of hundred; but Carrie told me you have five thousand dollars which that mine owner gave you."

"Never mind the five thousand dollars. Bring along your two hundred dollars. That will match the two hundred dollars I have put in so far. When the firm needs more money I'll lend it, see? We'll start on a capital of four hundred dollars, with Mr. Baxter as our first customer."

"You really mean that, Bob?" cried Howard, eagerly.

"Sure I do. You're my chum. It would just suit me to have you in with me. I'll have articles of copartnership drawn up right away. Glad I met you, for the sign painter can make it Seymour & King now. Stocks and bonds. How does that strike you?"

"Fine," cried Howard, tickled to death. "Bob, I shall never forget this. We'll stand by each other through thick and thin."

"Just as we always have, eh? You've lost your job by standing up for Carrie; why shouldn't I take care of you when I have the chance?"

"On what floor in the Bullion Building is your office?"

"Eighth floor, in the rear. Come around after three o'clock. I'll be there waiting for you. The sign ought to be on the door by that time. At any rate, you can't miss it, for the number is 326."

"All right. You can bet I'll be there," said Howard, with a beaming countenance.

Then the two boys separated.



The sign painter was lettering the door of No. 326 when Howard King walked up.

The firm name of Seymour & King, in semi-circular shape, stood out with refreshing prominence, and the man was working on the word "Stocks."

"Gee! That looks great," breathed Howard, with an expansive grin. "I wonder what old Stinson would say to that? Knock him silly, I guess."

Then he entered the room and found Bob seated before the desk writing.

Howard saw that there was a nice rug on the floor, and several water color pictures on the walls, with a big map of the city of New York.

Besides the desk, there was a fair-sized safe, three chairs and a small, substantial writing table.

"You're right in it, Bob," he remarked, as gay as a mud-lark.

"You mean we're right in it," corrected his chum.

"Of course. But I can't quite get it through my head yet that I am actually in business. You don't know how funny it seems to me."

"Oh, you'll get used to it just as soon as you have cut loose from Stinson. All that bothers me now is that Carrie won't have any one around to look out for her."

"Bunny hasn't been near her to-day for the first time in three weeks. I guess we've put a flea in his ear."

"Glad to hear it," replied Bob, in a tone of satisfaction.

"Well, if he doesn't haul in his horns for good, we'll both go around to his office and have a heart-to-heart talk with him. He won't be able to get back at us through either Stinson or Judson now."

"That's right. So you like the office, do you, Howard?"

"Sure I do. It's all to the good."

"You can tell your folks to-night that you and I are in business together."

"Of course. I'll bring around my two hundred dollars to-morrow."

"All right. Just sit up here, and I'll show you what I've spent so far," said Bob. "This is one of our account books. You can be the bookkeeper, if you want. One of these days I hope we'll do business enough to have a larger office and be able to hire a clerk to attend to the details."

"And a stenographer to write our letters, eh?" grinned Howard.

"Sure. Why not?"

That afternoon Bob gave an order to a printer for business cards, memorandums, letter headings, envelopes and other stationery which the business required.

Then he went up to the Astor House to see Mr. Baxter.

That gentleman was out, so the boy left a note for him, stating that he had secured a furnished office in the Bullion Building and was ready to execute business for him at once.

His office hours, he said, were from nine-thirty to four, and he would be glad to see Mr. Baxter as soon as he was ready to call.

The Western mine owner appeared promptly at room 326 at ten o'clock on the following morning.

"You've a cozy little den here, Bob," he remarked, as he placed a small package on the young broker's desk.

"I think so, sir."

"I see you have not forgotten the necessary safe."

"It was in the room when I took it. I haven't bought it as yet. The agent said I could have the use of it till further notice, with the privilege of buying it later on."

"You've taken a partner, I notice."

"He's a chum of mine, about my age, who also lost his position by taking my sister's part against Mr. Christopher Bunny."

"This man Bunny seems to have taken a great shine to your sister. I sized him up as a sort of ladies' man. I should be pleased to meet your sister some time, Bob."

"I'll see that you do, Mr. Baxter. She and mother will be up to see my office on Saturday afternoon. If you will make it convenient to drop in here any time after one o'clock that day I shall be glad to introduce you to them."

"Thank you, Bob. I'll try to be here. Now, if you're ready to talk business, I'll give you your first commission."

"I'm all ready, sir."

"I'm going to bring my box of stock certificates around to-morrow morning, and you can put them in your safe."

"It might be better for you to rent a box in a safe deposit vault."

"Possibly. I'll consider the matter. Well, I've got here four five hundred share certificates of Tonopah-Montana, for which I want two dollars and eighty cents; also ten two hundred share certificates of Goldfield-Florence, worth three dollars. See what you can do with these. They're good, salable stocks, and you ought to have no difficulty in disposing of them for me. With the proceeds I shall want you to buy me certain railroad bonds, to be selected from a list of the best gilt-edge securities you can find for me."

Bob took the securities and made a note of the transaction.

"As soon as you bring me all the stocks you want to dispose of I'll make a list of them to take around with me."

"I'll bring them down here after lunch, if you wish," said Mr. Baxter.

"Just as you say, sir."

After the mine owner had gone, Bob went around to a Wall Street daily and inserted a card which stated that the firm of Seymour & King, room 326 Bullion Building, dealt in stocks and bonds, and had for sale a line of gilt-edge Goldfield, Bullfrog and Tonopah mining stocks.

He then made arrangements to have a stock ticker put in, and subscribed for a couple of financial and stock papers.

Bob had a large casual acquaintance among the brokers, all of whom liked him and regarded him as a smart boy.

He met quite a number of them that morning, told them he'd gone into business for himself, and that for the present he was making a specialty of Western mining stocks.

Most of them thought the idea of a boy broker was a good joke, and consequently the news circulated throughout the Street, and several of the brokers made a call upon him at his office.



## CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH KING PROVIDES THE POINTER AND SEYMOUR THE MONEY FOR THE FIRM'S FIRST DEAL.

Bob was holding quite a levee in his office when a stout broker, known as Commodore Griscom, accompanied by another broker, walked into the room.

"Well, upon my word," exclaimed the Commodore, "is this the 'Amen Corner' of the Stock Exchange, or a political caucus, or what?"

Matters were rather dull in the Exchange, which accounted for the gathering.

"Hardly," replied Broker Greene, who sported a goatee in addition to his heavy mustache. "A new firm of brokers has invaded the Street, and we're making their acquaintance, or at least one of them. The other, we understand, is abroad rounding up a few lambs for the shearing appliance. Commodore, let me introduce you to the head of the boy brokerage firm of Seymour & King. Bob Seymour, this is Commodore Griscom."

"Happy to make your acquaintance, Commodore," said Bob, offering his hand. "Sorry I can't offer you a seat, but all the chairs are occupied."

"You can have mine, Commodore," cried a smooth-faced young broker, hastily vacating his seat.

"Don't disturb yourself, Benson," said the Commodore. "Glad to meet you, Seymour. So this is your sheep-shearing den, is it? Quite cosy, upon my word. You want to keep your safe locked when Greene is in here, and don't leave anything valuable exposed upon your desk."

"You're giving me a hard reputation, Commodore," laughed Broker Greene.

All the other brokers laughed, too.

"You deserve it, I guess," replied Griscom, who got his title from the fact that he was commodore of the Neptune Yacht Club.

"Isn't that a rather tough accusation to make against a friend?"

"It would be anywhere outside of Wall Street," replied the Commodore. "But I deem it my solemn duty to put young Seymour here on his guard against you. You are known to have the sharpest pair of shears in the Street, and very little gets by you. Under these circumstances your presence in this room is suspicious, to say the least."

A roar of laughter followed this sally.

"Oh, I'm not afraid of him, Commodore," said Bob, briskly. "I've got a pretty good pair of shears myself up my sleeve. I've got a tidy lot of Golden Fleece in my safe. Anybody who thinks he can do me out of it is welcome to make the attempt, but I won't answer for the consequences."

"Do you carry a gun?" asked Broker Newcomb.

"Oh, I'm not giving away my plan of defense. I may have a whole arsenal. You've got to tackle me to find out where you're at."

"There doesn't seem to be anything slow about you," spoke up another broker, who was wrestling with a fat Havana perfecto.

"I hope not. A fellow wants to have cut his eye-teeth before opening up an office down here. The way you gentlemen size up one another's piles and then lay yourselves out to get possession of your friend's money is enough to make the angels weep. If you succeed, you grab him by the hand, sympathize with him, and tell him how sorry you were to learn that he was on the wrong side of the market."

The brokers all thought Bob was quite amusing, and they laughed till their sides ached.

"Well, young man," said the Commodore, "I hope you don't include me in that category. I have no doubt but the hat fits Greene and a few more of your visitors, but I make it a point never to do any of my friends. When you've got any cash you want to invest, you can walk right into my office with the serene confidence that your uncle Griscom will take the most fatherly care of you."

"Seymour," chipped in Greene, "my advice to you is, never let the Commodore take you in tow. If you do, it's dollars to doughnuts you'll be living on snowballs before you know where you are."

"Young man," said Commodore Griscom, pointing his fat finger solemnly at Bob, "you are no doubt flattered by the presence here in your office of so many of the shining lights of the Exchange. Don't be deceived in their purpose. Every one of them has come here to size you up. When they go away it will be with the object of laying some trap for your inexperienced and unwary feet."

"The Commodore seems to see the worst side of everybody," grinned a tall, thin broker.

"He can't help it," chuckled Broker Greene. "He's an amateur photographer."

"I must be going," remarked the Commodore. "Any of you gentlemen who feel equal to the strain of accompanying me to the nearest cafe will find a mint julep ready for him on the counter. I wish you success, my young friend," to Bob. "Here is my card. I shall be happy to assist you in chasing the elusive eighths and quarters when you have any little deal on hand. But I warn you against devoting yourself entirely to the accumulation of money. Health and peace of mind beat money any day."

"I am agreeable to the Commodore's statement," said Greene, walking to the door on the strength of the former's invitation regarding a mint julep. "But I must say that the jingle of money will set a broker with the rheumatism to dancing a jig any day."

The rest of the brokers laughed and started for the door like a drove of sheep, but whether it was a mint julep that attracted them, or they thought they had stayed long enough, we are unable to say.

At any rate, Bob was left alone, and it wasn't long after before Howard walked in, and the two young brokers began to compare notes, as the saying is.

"Gee!" exclaimed King. "There's an awful smell of tobacco smoke in here. You've been having visitors, haven't you?"

"If you'd come in fifteen minutes ago you'd have thought half the members of the Exchange were crowded into this office."



"You don't say!"

"And you may gamble on it every one of them was up here with a view of ultimately annexing our little bunch of fleece."

"It's a mighty little bunch we have to lose just at present," laughed Howard.

"They haven't any idea of the extent of our capital. At any rate, they're not letting any thing get by them if they can help it. You know Edwin Greene?"

"Sure I do."

"Well, he was my first visitor. Had a bunch of Lige Harris Treasury Mine certificates, of the Bullfrog district, which he wanted to unload on us at six cents. I told him I was selling, not buying, just at present, and he was rather disappointed."

"He's one of the sharpest brokers in the Street, I've heard."

"You bet he is. He soaked Judson twice to my knowledge, and Judson isn't so easy, either."

"I know he got a slice of Stinson's boodle, too, once, and Stinson is as fly as any one."

"Well, to hear those fellows talk in here you'd think butter wouldn't melt in their mouths."

"I suppose they wanted to know all about our business?"

"Well, say, they tried to pump me for all they were worth."

"It didn't work, did it?" grinned Howard.

"I should say not. I'm right on to those gentlemen. I haven't knocked elbows with them for three years without picking up a thing or two, bet your life. All they got out of me they're welcome to."

"What's this?" asked Howard, picking up a paper.

"That's a full list of the Western mining stocks in the safe belonging to Mr. Baxter."

"Oh, I see. Well, I've got something to tell you, Bob."

"I'm listening."

"A combination has been formed to boom F. M. & G."

"How do you know that?" asked Bob, in a tone of interest.

"'Cause Stinson is one of the brokers that's going to do the buying. I overheard part of a conversation between him and Horace Wells, the big Exchange Place operator. He was in our place this afternoon in consultation with Stinson about the deal. Bunny is doing some business for Wells and steered him into Stinson's. Which means that Bunny, of course, expects to get a rake-off."

"I'll bet he does."

"Stinson never did any business before for Wells, so no one will suspect he has any dealing with the millionaire. He's got an order to buy every share of F. M. & G. in sight, the ruling figure of which is 38. Now, it struck me that if you would buy to the extent of your five thousand dollar pile you would be able to unload it on Stinson later on at a profit. I don't expect to make anything out of this, as the five thou. is yours and not the firm's, but your interest goes with me every time."

"Thanks, old man; but you forget you are providing the

pointer, and that entitles you to a half-interest in the deal. That's the way I look at it."

"Oh, I don't want as much as that. Just put me down at any old thing."

"Nonsense! We're partners. We divide always even. I'll sell my Bullfrog Denver to-morrow, if I can. I see it's quoted to-day in the San Francisco Exchange at one dollar and ten cents. I'll let it go at a dollar. Then I'll buy twelve hundred shares of F. M. & G. on a ten per cent. margin on the strength of your tip."

"All right. We're bound to make something. I've no doubt it will go up ten or twenty points within the next ten days."

Next day Bob called on Commodore Griscom and offered to put up his five thousand Denver as security for the purchase of twelve hundred shares of F. M. & G. at 38, and the Commodore, after looking up the Western quotations, accepted the order.

Half an hour later he notified Seymour & King that the stock had been bought and that he held it subject to their order.

## CHAPTER IX.

### IN WHICH PIGGY O'TOOLE IS CAUGHT IN THE ACT.

Next day was Saturday, and a few minutes after one o'clock Mrs. Seymour and Carrie, accompanied by Howard King, entered room 326 in the Bullion Building and found Bob impatiently awaiting their arrival.

"Well, mother, what do you think of our office?"

"Isn't it just lovely!" exclaimed Carrie, going into raptures. "Just as neat as a pin."

Mrs. Seymour expressed herself as being much pleased with the place.

The three chairs being occupied, Howard perched himself on the safe.

"You need another chair, Bob," said his sister. "It's a shame that Howard, your partner, should be obliged to sit up on the office safe."

"What's the odds, so long as you're happy?" grinned Howard.

"Have you boys done any business yet?" asked Carrie.

"Sure we have," replied her brother. "Do you think we are asleep?"

"What have you done?" asked the girl, all curiosity to learn the particulars.

"Carrie, you don't want to butt in on the secrets of the firm. I suppose you want to find out how much Howard is making, so as to keep tab on him."

"Why, the idea!" blushed the girl. "Mother, will you make him stop teasing me?"

The little mother smiled, but made no remark.

"You see how much interest Carrie takes in you now, Howard, don't you?"

King grinned and got red in the face, while the girl



grabbed up a small writing pad and began to beat Bob about the head.

In the midst of this little bit of by-play the door opened and Mr. Baxter walked into the room.

Carrie immediately subsided and Bob jumped to his feet.

"Mr. Baxter, this is my mother," he said.

"Glad to meet you, Mrs. Seymour," said the mine owner, bowing.

"And this is my sister, Carrie. Carrie, Mr. Baxter. Take this chair, sir."

The Westerner seated himself.

We have heard a good deal about you, Mr. Baxter," said Mrs. Seymour, smiling. "You have been very kind to my son, and I wish to thank you for it."

"My dear madam, you forget that your son saved me from meeting with a severe, if not fatal, accident. I couldn't do less than make some trifling acknowledgment for the obligation I feel I am under to him."

"I think you have done very handsomely by him, and I assure you that we all appreciate your generosity."

"I beg you will not mention it further, madam. You are no doubt proud of Bob, and I assure you he is one of the brightest boys I have ever met."

"Oh, come, now, Mr. Baxter, no bouquets, please," laughed the boy. "Mother will be surrounding me with all the virtues in the calendar after this."

Everybody laughed at Bob's remark, and then the conversation became general.

Finally Mr. Baxter asked if the ladies had lunched, and, finding they had not, invited all hands to take lunch with him at a nearby restaurant.

After a little hesitation, Mrs. Seymour and Carrie accepted the invitation, and then everybody started for the elevator.

Mr. Baxter escorted Carrie and her mother, the boy brokers bringing up the rear.

They made quite a gay party at the table, and Carrie's beauty attracted some attention from the gentlemen seated at the other tables.

Mrs. Seymour and her daughter thought Mr. Baxter one of the most agreeable gentlemen they had ever met, and the mine owner was quite as favorably impressed with them.

They remained an hour at the restaurant, and then the party broke up, Bob's mother and sister taking a car for the Bridge.

"I've had two calls from Christopher Bunny," said Mr. Baxter to Bob, when he and the two boys had returned to the office in the Bullion Building.

"You don't say!" replied Seymour. "Does he still hope to rope you in?"

"Apparently he does. He's a hard man to shake off. I told him I had concluded not to do any business with him; but he does not seem inclined to take 'no' for an answer. He wants to introduce me to Mortimer Judson. I declined to be introduced, on the ground that I had already arranged with a brokerage firm to attend to my business. He wanted to know who the firm was, and I wouldn't tell him."

"He's got the persistency of the ant," said Howard. "I

think he'd drop dead if he knew that it was Bob and I who constituted the firm in question."

"I must get a drink of water," said Bob, rising. "We'll have to get a water cooler, Howard. It doesn't pay, running out down the corridor every time you want a drink."

He walked to the door and threw it open.

A boy with a red head, who had evidently been listening at the keyhole, almost fell into his arms.

Bob grabbed him in time to save him from falling over on his face.

As he raised him to his feet he recognized him.

"Piggy O'Toole!" he exclaimed, in surprise.

Then he pulled him into the room and shut the door.

"What the dickens were you doing at that door, you young rascal!" he demanded.

"None of yer business!" cried Piggy, trying to release himself.

"None of my business, eh! I guess you'll find you're mistaken. You were listening at that door, that's what you were, Piggy, and we don't stand for such sneaky business in this building."

Howard now came over and caught the boy by the ear.

"Let me ear alone, will youse?" roared Piggy, kicking out like a skittish colt.

"That's the ear you had at the keyhole, I guess," grinned Howard, "and it needs to be taught a lesson."

"Oh, oh, oh!" howled the lawyer's boy. "Will youse quit?"

"Then tell us what brought you here."

"Nuttin'."

"You're not telling the truth, Piggy," said Bob, severely. "Did Mr. Bunny send you here to spy upon us?"

"Naw. Youse are hurtin' me ear, I tell youse."

"Well, why were you listening at our door?"

"Wasn't listenin'."

"Yes, you were. I caught you at it."

Piggy was silent.

"What shall we do with him, Howard?" asked Bob.

"Fire him downstairs."

"Youse won't do nuttin' of de kind," said the lawyer's boy, sullenly.

"Are you going to admit that your boss sent you here to find out what you could about our affairs?"

"Naw. He didn't send me, I tell youse."

"What's the use of denying it, Piggy? We know he did."

"If youse know, wot's de use er askin' me, den?" replied the red-headed boy, defiantly.

Bob saw there was no use trying to get the young rascal to admit anything, so he opened the door again, seized Piggy by the collar of his jacket and the slack of his pants and walked him over to the elevator.

He signaled a descending cage, and when it stopped he pushed Piggy O'Toole into it and returned to the office.

"I wonder how Bunny found out we had an office in this building?" said Howard. "And even supposing he found that out, what is his little game, anyway?"

"I think I can throw some light on the subject," said the



Westerner, who had been a quiet observer of Piggy's discomfiture. "I'm positive I saw that boy hanging about the entrance to the Astor House when I came out a couple of hours ago. If that is Christopher Bunny's boy, then the old lawyer is using him to spy on my movements. He wanted to find out who my brokers were, I guess."

"It'll kind of surprise him when he hears Piggy's report, I'll bet," grinned Howard.

"He must have followed me to this building, and no doubt he was listening at the door when your mother and sister were here."

"The little villain!" cried Bob. "I'd like to shake him out of his clothes."

"Of course he followed us to the restaurant," said Howard, "hung around till we came out and then shadowed us back here. He didn't hear anything that'll do Bunny any good, that's a satisfaction."

"But the little imp is liable to come back and snoop around when we aren't suspecting his presence," said Bob, in a tone of annoyance.

"If we catch him up to any more of that business we ought to have him pulled in. Then maybe he'll squeal and give Bunny away."

"I'm afraid I shall have trouble with Christopher Bunny," said Mr. Baxter. "Lawyers of his stamp are dangerous men to deal with. You can't reach them in the open. They always work under cover. When you do catch them, they manage to find some legal loophole to worm out at. I've always distrusted lawyers."

"What can he do?" asked Bob. "You did not even promise to do business with him. He's simply mad at losing the rake-off he'd have secured by steering you alongside of either Stinson or Judson."

"There's more in it than that, Bob," replied Mr. Baxter.

"What do you mean, sir?"

"I'm satisfied Christopher Bunny has got his eye on the Golden Dream Mine. He is in communication with people in the Goldfield district who, I now believe, are trying by hook or crook to get control of the property. They can't do it fairly, as my partner and myself practically own the whole of the claims, but there are more ways than one of skinning a cat when the object is worth the risk and people are unscrupulous enough to go the limit."

## CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH THE BOY BROKERS REALIZE A PROFIT OF \$33,000

ON F. M. & G.

It was after ten, Monday morning, and Bob was alone in the office.

Howard had gone over to the Exchange to watch from the gallery the F. M. & G. stock, which had closed Saturday at 38 $\frac{3}{4}$ .

The knob of the door turned and Broker Green entered.

"Good morning, Mr. Greene," said Bob, cheerfully. "Take a seat."

"Fine morning, Seymour," remarked the broker, as he seated himself alongside the desk. "By the way, you told me Saturday you had some Western mining stocks for sale."

"Yes, sir."

"Will you let me see your list?"

"Certainly."

Bob took the list out of a pigeon hole and laid it before the broker.

"What are you asking for this Red Top?" asked Greene, after he had gone over the list carefully.

"The market price," replied Bob.

"That's two dollars."

Bob took out his daily market list of Western quotations.

Red Top closed at two dollars and fifteen cents on Saturday."

"I'll give you two dollars and take the one thousand shares."

Bob shook his head.

"I can't take less than two dollars and fifteen cents, Mr. Greene. I believe it will go higher this week."

"What makes you think so?"

"A dividend has been declared by the Red Top Mining Company of five cents a share, to be paid February 20th, and the conditions in this mine are reported to be highly satisfactory."

"Well, I'll give you two dollars and ten cents."

"My instructions are not to sell Red Top under the market."

Mr. Greene pondered a moment or two, and finally said he'd take the shares.

"Where did you get all this stock, Seymour?" he asked, curiously. "You seem to have only the top-notchers."

"A gentleman from the West left them with us for sale."

"Your list represents quite a comfortable total. You might influence your client to go into some of the railroads. As you're not a member of the Exchange, you will have to do business through a regular broker. Now, look here, Seymour, I'll make it an object for you to throw your business my way. I'll allow you a percentage on the commissions. I'll do better by you than anybody else. You know where my office is."

"Thank you, Mr. Greene. I'll remember your offer."

"Don't go near the Commodore," continued the broker, as he took out his check book and filled in the price of the Red Top shares he had just purchased, making it payable to the order of Seymour & King. "He's too slick for young fellows like you. Come to me, and I'll do the square thing by you every time."

Soon after Greene had taken his departure John Baxter came in, and Bob told him about the sale of his Red Top."

The boy endorsed the check and handed it to him.

"You have an account at the Republic National," he said. "It will simplify matters if you deposit that to your



credit yourself. I will enter the transaction in our books and charge up the commission against you."

Mr. Baxter nodded, took the check and put it in his pocketbook.

"Do you know," he said to the boy broker, "I think I'd like to take a little flyer on the market. Could you recommend any particular stock to my attention?"

"What put that idea into your head, Mr. Baxter?" asked Bob, in some surprise.

"Oh, I want a little excitement—that is, something to occupy my mind. If I had a few thousands at stake, say on a ten per cent. margin, it would kind of add an interest to my present stay in New York. I have to remain here some little time, as I am having certain improved mining machinery built for the Golden Dream Mine, and that can't be done in a day."

"Well, Mr. Baxter, there is only one stock I would ask you to put your money in, and that is the F. M. & G. Railroad. I have strong reason to believe that will make a decided advance shortly. It was 38½ this morning. I can't tell you what it rules at now, as our ticker hasn't been put in yet, but I think it may be a little higher. It is safe to buy it at 39 or even 40."

"You'll have to get it through another broker, won't you?"

"Yes; but I'll be able to make a small commission. One well-known broker has already made arrangements with me to that effect, and I have a similar offer from another."

"Well, then, you can buy me one thousand shares of the stock."

"Wait a minute. I'll run in next door and see what it is going at."

Bob found that quite a number of sales had been made that morning of F. M. & G., as he expected, and that the last figure was 38½.

"The chances are I'll have to pay 39 for it," he said to Mr. Baxter, when he re-entered his office, so you'd better give me your check for three thousand nine hundred dollars."

The Westerner wrote his check for that amount and handed it to the boy.

"There you are. Now I feel a sort of personal interest in the New York market. I'll keep my eye on F. M. & G. after this. If it goes down, and your broker calls on you for more margin, let me know, and I will make good."

"All right, sir," replied Bob, as he made a note of the transaction; "but I don't think there is any danger of that. I should advise you to hang on to it for a twenty-point rise, at least."

"You speak with great confidence," smiled Mr. Baxter. "If you were one of the big brokers I should be inclined to think you possessed inside-information about this road."

"Well, my partner heard something about the stock which leads me to feel almost sure that it's going to boom within a very few days."

"What did he hear?" asked Mr. Baxter, with interest.

"Well, he heard on what I consider good authority that a combination has been formed to corner the stock. At any

rate, we know for certain that Stinson has an order from a millionaire operator to buy in all he can get as quietly as possible."

"That looks like a good tip, Bob. Why don't you go into that yourself?" with a twinkle in his eye?"

"I have already done so, sir. I have bought twelve hundred shares at 38 on a margin, and I'd buy more if I had the money to put up," said the boy, confidently.

"Give me that check back, Bob. I'll risk buying three thousand shares instead of one thousand."

He made out his check for eleven thousand seven hundred dollars.

Bob altered his memorandum and put on his hat.

"I'll rush around to one of those brokers and put your order through," he said.

Locking up the office, he carried the order this time to Broker Savage.

That afternoon he sold Baxter's two thousand shares of Tonopah-Montana at two dollars and ninety cents and his two thousand shares of Goldfield-Florence at three dollars and twenty cents to a well-known brokerage firm, receiving a check for twelve thousand dollars, which he handed to the mine owner next morning when he appeared at the office.

"How much commission do I owe you now?" asked Mr. Baxter, as he took the check.

"Well, you owe us six hundred and twenty-five dollars, less one hundred dollars which you advanced that evening at the hotel to help me fit out the office."

Mr. Baxter handed Bob his check for five hundred and twenty-five dollars.

"That squares us for the time being," he said, smiling, "and gives you a little cash for yourselves."

"Thank you, sir," replied Bob. "Howard and I wouldn't have made that much in a dog's age as messengers. I guess Christopher Bunny did us both a good turn by securing our discharge from our former occupations."

"I guess he did," answered Mr. Baxter. "By the way, I see F. M. & G. has gone up to 40. I am, therefore, three thousand to the good, less commissions, on that transaction."

"Yes, sir. And the firm of Seymour & King are two thousand four hundred dollars ahead of the game on the same principle."

During the balance of the week Bob had several customers, attracted by his advertisement in the *Wall Street Indicator*, for Western mining stocks.

He also received a number of letters of inquiry from out-of-town people.

The result was that he sold about fifteen thousand dollars' worth of Goldfield and Tonopah shares for his client, and received commissions amounting to one thousand eight hundred and seventy-five dollars.

In the meantime F. M. & G. went up to 45, at which figure Bob bought three hundred more shares, on the usual margin, from the Commodore.

This gave the firm control of fifteen hundred shares of the stock, which was attracting considerable attention in the market.



On Monday the demand for F. M. & G. on the floor of the Exchange set the stock booming in earnest.

There was a rush on the part of the brokers to get some of it to meet an influx of orders from their customers, who all wanted to buy it, now it was on the rise.

It closed at 52 on Monday and opened at 52½ Tuesday morning.

Both Bob and his partner were very much excited over the prospect of raking in a big wad on the deal.

They spent a good part of their time watching the quotations which appeared on the tape, for the indicator had been put in their office.

Every time the price jumped an eighth they shook hands, and, as this thing occurred with great frequency, they presently got tired of the exercise.

When the Exchange closed on Wednesday F. M. & G. had reached 63, an advance of 25 points over their first purchase, and Bob began to consider the advisability of closing out the deal.

He called on Mr. Baxter that afternoon at the hotel, but found he was out.

"I'm not going home till I see him," he said to Howard. "Drop in at the house as you go by and tell my folks I may not be home to supper."

"All right," replied his partner, starting for the Bridge cars.

Bob went to the Astor House again at six o'clock.

Mr. Baxter was in his room, and Bob went up.

"Hello, Bob," said the Westerner, in some surprise. "I didn't expect to see you again to-day. You look as if you had something to tell me. It will keep till after dinner, won't it?"

"Oh, yes."

"Well, brush your hair, and we'll go down to the dining-room."

After dinner they returned to Mr. Baxter's room.

"Now I'll hear what you've got to say, Bob," seating himself comfortably and lighting a cigar.

"I want to speak to you about F. M. & G."

"Go on. It seems to be booming finely. I noticed that it hit 63 this afternoon; that indicates a profit of seventy-two thousand dollars on my side of the house. How high do you think it will go?"

"I don't know, sir. I am thinking of selling, and I would advise you to do the same."

"Do you think there is any danger of a collapse?" asked Mr. Baxter, taking the cigar from his mouth and regarding his young broker fixedly.

"The danger is always present, sir. F. M. & G. is 'way above its normal price just now and may go on the toboggan at any moment. Somebody who has a big block is likely to throw it on the market unexpectedly, and if the clique that has been booming it can't or don't want to take it in, the stock will go down in no time."

"Then you advise me to sell?"

"I do. I'm getting kind of nervous. There's a big profit coming to us, and I want to realize. If it should go to pieces before you get out it would be tough."

"All right. Use your judgment. Sell me out if you think best."

Accordingly, next morning the first thing Bob called upon both Green and the Commodore and ordered the stock sold.

The shares were disposed of to eager buyers among the first of the morning's transactions in the Exchange.

Then Bob and his partner figured up what they had made by the deal.

The twelve hundred shares they had got at 38 turned them in a profit of twenty-five dollars per share, while the three hundred shares they had purchased later at 45 netted them eighteen dollars per share.

Altogether, after deducting expenses, they found they had made thirty-three thousand dollars.

Mr. Baxter had made, all expenses deducted, seventy-one thousand dollars.

An hour later the very thing occurred which Bob had feared.

Three blocks of five hundred shares were unloaded on the market.

The syndicate took in two, but the third floored them, and F. M. & G. went to the wall.

"Gee whizz!" exclaimed Howard, when the boy brokers read the signs of disaster on the tape. "Weren't we lucky to get out in time?"

"Well, I should smile," grinned Bob.

And then they shook hands.

## CHAPTER XI.

IN WHICH A BOGUS D. T. MESSENGER BOY VISITS THE BOY BROKERS.

With the sum of over thirty-five thousand dollars to their credit in bank, Seymour & King decided that the small quarters on the eighth floor of the Bullion Building were altogether too cramped for their business.

"It is true we have only one client," remarked Bob to his partner. "But I'm afraid we won't get any more in a hurry unless we get nearer to the sidewalk and throw a bigger bluff."

"That's about the size of it," agreed Howard. "We're lost up here. It's well enough when you're known and people get into the habit of calling on you. But this office looks awfully skimpy lately. There's nothing about it to inspire confidence. Gives the impression of here to-day and gone to-morrow. Nothing like putting on a good front, even when you can hardly afford it."

"That's right," said Bob. "Appearances go a long way, especially among the lambs who flock this way when times are good. We've sold most of Mr. Baxter's mining stock, and it's high time we were angling for more customers. We must get right down to business after this, and to that end I suggest that we take the suit of two rooms on the ground floor, back. I was speaking to the agent of the building



about them this morning, and he agreed to allow us to make the change after I showed him our bank book."

"Take the rooms, by all means, Bob. What's the rent?"

His partner named the figure, which looked steep beside what they were paying for their present office, but the boys considered that from a business standpoint it was easily worth the difference, and as long as they could afford it they thought it good business judgment to make the change.

Accordingly, Bob arranged with the agent that afternoon and next day they moved downstairs.

The fittings from room 326 they put in the small room, which was to be their private sanctum.

The main office they furnished outright as a reception and counting-room.

Their new sign read:

### SEYMOUR & KING,

Stocks and Bonds.

Also Western Mining Securities.

"That reads tip-top," said Howard, admiring it after the sign painter had finished his work. "No flies on the boy brokers of Wall Street."

"I should say not," replied Bob, complacently.

Then they went inside and surveyed the general office room, with its big safe, its high desk for a bookkeeper, when work got brisk enough for them to employ one; its ticker, its letter-file cabinet, likely to remain empty for many a day, but put in for the sake of effect; the pictures and clock on the walls, and other details that go to make up a businesslike office.

"We've got everything but——"

"Business," interpolated Bob.

"Exactly," nodded Howard. "Everything but business, and that's the most important of all."

"We can't get that all at once. We must creep before we can hope to walk."

"I say, Bob, don't you think we ought to sport a pair of false mustaches. I'm afraid people will think we're too young to intrust with commissions."

"I'm not going to worry about that, Howard."

"I would suggest that we advertise and try to work up a mail-order business like Stinson's. Then we'll need a stenographer, and perhaps your sister will come and work for us. Stinson is only paying her nine dollars, and she's easily worth fifteen dollars."

"Your idea is good. Our youthful appearance won't frighten away out-of-town customers, for they won't know how old we are by our advertisements. We will advertise by all means."

Mr. Baxter was naturally their first visitor, and he gave a nod of approval as he looked the new office over.

"Well, boys," he said, "I'd like to start you off with an order. Have you got any more tips up your sleeve this morning?"

"Sorry to say that we have not, sir," replied Bob, with a grin.

"Perhaps you could recommend something that you think to be a safe investment?"

"Well, you might buy a few shares of D. & G. if you're anxious to get in the market again," said Bob.

"Good stock, eh?"

"Good as anything you could tackle just now. It's selling low."

"How much?"

"About 80."

"Well, buy me a thousand shares on margin."

He sat down at Bob's desk and wrote his check for eight thousand dollars.

"Use your own judgment about closing the deal, as I shall probably not think anything more about it. I'm just giving you the order for luck."

"I wish we had a few more customers like you, Mr. Baxter," said Howard.

"Oh, you'll build up a business in time. You boys are too smart to get lost in the shuffle."

Bob put on his hat and started for Commodore Griscom's office to give him the order for the one thousand shares of D. & G.

At half-past eleven next morning Bob met Carrie on her way to an early lunch, and easily persuaded her to come in and see their new office.

Both he and Howard had been praising it up to beat the band the evening before to Carrie and her mother, and the girl was full of curiosity to see their new quarters.

While they were showing her around the two rooms a District Telegraph boy entered with a message.

"Who for?" asked Bob.

"Mr. John Baxter. Jest sign dis paper, will youse?"

The boy's voice sounded familiar to Bob, and he gave the messenger a sharp look.

Clearly it was the freckled face of Piggy O'Toole, although his hair appeared to have turned from a brick red to a curly blond hue, and his uniform pretty well disguised him.

"Say, Howard," said Bob. "Who does this kid put you in mind of?"

"Why," said Howard, in some astonishment, after giving the messenger a square look, "it's Piggy O'Toole, isn't it? But what has happened to his hair?"

"What are youse fellers givin' me? Me name ain't Piggy. It's O'Brien."

"Well, you've the face and the voice of Piggy, all right, but you haven't his hair, and you're dressed in a D. T. messenger suit," said Bob.

He knocked off the boy's cap and, grabbing him by the hair, was not surprised to find that it came off in his hand.

It was, as he suspected, a wig.

The bogus messenger now stood revealed as Piggy O'Toole himself.

"Well, Piggy, what have you got to say for yourself?" laughed Bob. "What are you masquerading for?"

"Youse is awful smart, ain't youse?" retorted Piggy, in great disgust at his exposure.

"You'd better get a new voice and a new face the next time you work the Old King Brady racket on us. Did you imagine that a blond wig and a borrowed messenger uni-



form would deceive us? I thought you were smarter than that, Piggy. Well, what's your little game this time? What's that one-eyed boss of yours up to now, anyway?"

"Nuttin' dat I knows of," replied Piggy, sulkily.

"He sent you 'round with that letter for Mr. Baxter, didn't he?"

"Youse wants ter know too much," replied Piggy, edging toward the door.

"Hold on there," cried Bob, grasping him by the arm.

"We're not going to let you give us the slip as easy as that. You've got to explain why you came in here under false colors."

"I ain't got to do nuttin' of der kind."

"Own up, or we'll hand you over to the police."

"No, youse won't," replied the lawyer's boy, doggedly.

"You're a stubborn little kid," said Bob, giving him a shake. "It strikes me we'll have to teach you a lesson."

"Youse won't teach me nuttin'," objected Piggy, struggling hard but unavailingly to escape from Bob's grasp.

"Here, Howard," said Bob. "Keep your eye on him. Don't let him escape."

King immediately placed himself between the lawyer's boy and the door.

Bob walked to the window, threw it up and looked out into the area.

Then he came back and, giving the boy a stern look, said:

"Are you going to tell us why you came here in that disguise with a letter for Mr. Baxter?"

"Youse had better let me go, if youse knows when youse is well off," replied the boy, with an ugly look.

"You refuse to tell, do you?"

The boy remained silent.

"Grab him, Howard."

"Help!" yelled Piggy O'Toole, as the young brokers seized and raised him from the floor by his arms and legs.

"What shall we do with him?" asked King, stifling Piggy's cries.

"Fire him out," grinned Seymour, nodding at the window.

The tough youth struggled desperately as they carried him to the open window.

"Bob, Bob," cried Carrie, who had been a quiet observer of the scene until this moment. "Be careful. Don't hurt the boy."

"Don't butt in, Carrie," answered her brother. "We won't kill him."

"Wow!" shouted Howard.

What's the matter?" asked his partner.

"The little villain bit my thumb."

"Don't you mind. Now, then, swing him. One—two—three!"

They landed Piggy with a bump on the window-sill.

"Out with him."

They let the lawyer's boy drop feet first into the area, eight feet below, where he landed in a heap.

"Now stay there till some one lets you out," said Bob, slamming down the window.

## CHAPTER XII.

IN WHICH BOB MEETS WITH A SURPRISE AT DOBBS FERRY.

Piggy O'Toole didn't remain very long in the area behind the big office building.

There were ways of getting out that soon presented themselves to a youth of his peculiar talents, and he speedily availed himself of one of them.

When Howard looked out five minutes later to see how he was amusing himself he was nowhere in sight.

"Piggy has got away," he remarked to Bob.

"Has he?" replied his partner, carelessly.

The boy brokers were alone, Carrie having departed right after Piggy's undignified exit through the window.

"Sure thing. He's about as slippery as they come, I guess."

"That letter he brought is evidently from Christopher Bunny. He still persists in following our friend Baxter up. Well, it won't do him any good."

At this point the letter carrier entered with a couple of letters for the firm.

"Here's the first fruits of our new advertisement," said Bob, after opening the first. "It's from a lady, too. Asks us to buy her twenty-five shares of L. E. & W. at 40, and encloses a draft for one hundred dollars. She signs herself Florence Drew."

"And the other?" asked Howard.

Bob opened the second letter.

"Gentlemen," read the young broker, "I am an invalid and cannot call on you personally. I am interested in Western mining stocks. I have just received a legacy and would like to invest it in some good Goldfield stock. Would consider it a favor if a representative of your firm would call upon me, so that I might confer with him on the subject. Take a New York Central train to Dobbs Ferry. A conveyance will be on hand to meet the thirty train Thursday afternoon."

"That's to-morrow," said Howard.

"Yes. I suppose I'd better go up there and see the gentleman."

"Sure. What's his name?"

"Thomas Hardy."

"If his legacy amounts to much, and we can do business with him, we ought to make a stake," grinned Howard.

"Well, we've got a lot of Goldfield, Tonopah and Bullfrog literature, which, with what I have picked up from Mr. Baxter, will enable me to give the gentleman a good insight into the Southern Nevada gold fields. I have got all the really good mining propositions checked off. There are a whole flood of wildcats, but Mr. Baxter has put me wise as to them, and so I will be able to warn our correspondent what species of investments he should steer clear of. Of course, I shall try to sell him a portion of the balance of Mr. Baxter's holdings still in our possession. They are as good as anything he could select—Jumbo especially, which is quoted this morning at 144, which Western ad-  
vices say is low."



"Why not sell him your Bullfrog-Denver, Bob?" suggested Howard. "You're still hanging on to that."

"That would cost him a little over five thousand dollars, and he may not have so much money to invest. However, I'll mention it to him."

Bob put on his hat and went out to see the Commodore about the twenty-five shares of L. E. & W. for their lady customer.

Commodore Griscom was busy when he entered the outer office and Bob had to wait.

He took a chair in a corner and picked up a copy of the "Herald."

He got interested in a report of a swell marriage of the afternoon before at a Fifth Avenue church and did not observe the entrance of two gentlemen, who took up their position a few feet away and carried on a conversation in a low tone.

At length Bob finished the story, and was about to turn the paper, when one of the callers said something in a louder tone, in which the name Judson figured.

This attracted the boy's notice, and he glanced over the top of the paper at the speaker.

He recognized Stinson.

"Are you sure?" he heard the other gentleman say.

"Positive," replied Stinson. "The pool has been formed and Judson is buying the stock."

"What is it going at to-day?" asked his companion.

"Around 50, but within ten days it will be selling at 80, as sure as you stand there. If you'll go in with me on this we ought to clear a quarter of a million without any trouble. I got the tip by the merest accident, through a legal friend who doesn't realize the value of his information. I am sharing this pointer with you because I haven't enough money at present to work it alone."

"All right," said the other. "I'm in."

Just then an attendant stepped up and said the Commodore would see Mr. Stinson, and so Bob heard no more.

He had heard enough to set him to thinking, however.

Judson was buying some stock, then ruling around 50, for a combination which had been formed to corner it.

"I must find out the name of that stock," mused Bob. "This looks like another good tip. I don't believe in letting anything worth while get by me. If Stinson thinks it will go to 80 within ten days, there's a pretty good chance that it will, for Stinson has a mighty wise head. Just as soon as I spot that stock I'm going to do a little buying myself. I'll go in to the extent of five thousand or six thousand shares. A profit of twenty-five or thirty dollars a share on that amount would put Howard and I on easy street all right and give some of these bright Wall Street men the knowledge that the boy brokers they make fun at are in the market with both feet."

As soon as Bob had transacted his business with the Commodore he made a bee-line for the Stock Exchange.

He went into the gallery and looked over the floor for Mr. Judson.

At length he spotted him passing here and there among

the brokers who were congregated in the vicinity of the Iowa C. post.

He stopped and spoke to several brokers with whom Bob was acquainted, and made pad memorandums indicating transactions.

Later on, Bob followed these cues up and found that Judson appeared to be buying Iowa C. exclusively.

This stock Bob ascertained was going at 49½.

As soon as he was certain of Judson's purchases he returned to the office and had a consultation with his partner, the result of which was that before the Exchange closed for the day he had placed two orders for three thousand shares each of Iowa C. with Brokers Greene and Griscom, paying 50 for the stock, and depositing in each case fifteen thousand dollars as a margin security.

Mr. Baxter hadn't called that day on them, which was something unusual for them, and so Bob went around to the Astor House to find him and tip him off on Iowa C.

The clerk told the boy that he hadn't seen Mr. Baxter since the preceding day at noon.

Bob returned to the hotel at six, but Mr. Baxter had not appeared.

His room key and a number of letters that had come for him during the day were in his box, which showed that the Westerner hadn't been near his hotel since breakfast time, at least.

Bob went to a restaurant and took his supper, strolled around City Hall Park, and at eight o'clock turned up at the Astor House again.

But Mr. Baxter had not appeared.

He hung around till the night clerk appeared, and then learned that the mine owner had not occupied his room the preceding night.

"He must have gone out of town on business," thought the boy, who then started for his home.

Bob called at the Astor House next morning before he went to the office, but with the same result as before.

Mr. Baxter hadn't turned up, for the letters were still in his box.

"I guess he's gone to Philadelphia," thought the young broker. "I now remember he spoke about going there."

Several letters of inquiry were received by the young brokerage firm that morning, which showed that their advertisement was attracting notice.

Howard answered them.

After lunch Bob took a subway express for Grand Central Station, where he boarded a train that stopped at Dobbs Ferry.

Arrived at his destination, he stepped down on the platform and looked about him for the promised conveyance.

There were several vehicles drawn up before the station, and Bob advanced to the nearest—a buggy in which sat a young man of twenty.

"I am looking for a rig from Mr. Thomas Hardy," began Bob.

"Right here," replied the young man. "Are you from Seymour & King?"

"Yes."



"Jump in, then. Mr. Hardy lives about two miles from here. He is expecting you."

Inside of twenty minutes they entered the yard of a neat-looking country home, and Bob was at once conducted into the sitting-room and the presence of the owner of the house—Mr. Hardy.

He was a pleasant-featured man of thirty-five, with an intellectual appearance and a studious air which corresponded well with it.

A pair of crutches leaned against his chair.

He introduced himself as Thomas Hardy.

"You are connected with the brokerage firm of Seymour & King?" he said.

"I am a member of the firm, sir. My name is Robert Seymour."

"Indeed!" replied Mr. Hardy, in surprise. "You look rather young to be a stock broker."

"I'm afraid I can't help that, sir," laughed Bob.

"No; I suppose not. Well, your firm received my letter, and I am prepared to hear what you have to offer in the line indicated by me."

Bob got right down to business, and, being a convincing talker and pretty well informed upon his subject, he soon interested Mr. Hardy.

He showed the gentleman plans and data regarding the various prominent Nevada mining camps, laid before him all the points he had got from Mr. Baxter, furnished him with statistics about the really good mines in Goldfield, Tonopah and Bullfrog, and pointed out those which seemed, in his opinion, the most likely to yield a steady dividend income.

"How much do you wish to invest, Mr. Hardy?" he asked, finally.

"Between five and six thousand dollars."

"Well, if you would like to purchase a five-thousand-share block of Bullfrog-Denver at one dollar and five cents I can accommodate you right away, as we have the certificate in the office, with those other mining shares on that list. If none of those stocks suit you, we will have to send to Goldfield for such other selections as you make."

"Let me hear the particulars of the Denver," said Mr. Hardy.

"It is a very stable stock, sir, and shows every sign of an early advance in price. According to late reports of a reliable character, it is going to make one of the biggest producers of Southern Nevada."

Bob talked up his Bullfrog-Denver to such good effect that Mr. Hardy finally decided to buy the block, and the boy agreed to fetch the certificate to him next day.

He accepted an invitation to take tea with Mr. Hardy, after ascertaining that a train for New York stopped at the Ferry at seven-thirty.

Mr. Hardy was about to order his buggy to be brought around, when Bob told him he would just as soon walk to the station, as he enjoyed the exercise.

He left the house at six-thirty, in the gloom of early evening, and had covered half of the distance to the railroad, as he thought, when he realized he must have made a

wrong turning, for he could no longer recognize his bearings.

He had walked into a rather lonesome district.

Looking around, he saw a light shining from a window of a house a short distance away.

"I shall have to stop there and have those people put me right," he said to himself.

He hastened his steps, for he did not know how far he might have to retrace his way, and he did not want to miss the train.

Had it been daylight he would have seen that the house was a very shabby affair.

It was surrounded by a straggling, disreputable-looking picket fence and a superabundance of shrubbery.

Bob stepped up to the rickety gate, which seemed on the point of parting from its hinges, and as he passed through the ill-kept front yard he heard the sound of wheels in the road from the direction he had come.

Before the boy reached the front door the vehicle stopped before the house and a man and a boy alighted.

After tying the horse to the fence, they entered the yard, walking rapidly, and brushed by Bob in the gloom without observing him.

The man knocked smartly on the door.

The light presently disappeared from the window, and soon after the front door opened and a rough-looking individual appeared with a lighted lamp in his hand.

Bob stood less than a yard away, and when the light flashed upon the faces of the newcomers he started back with astonishment as he recognized them.

They were none other than Christopher Bunny, the Wall Street lawyer, and his office boy, Piggy O'Toole.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR THE ABSENCE OF MR. BAXTER FROM THE ASTOR HOUSE.

"What the dickens brings those two out here?" breathed Bob.

The boy was soon to find out.

"Well, Heron, here I am," said Christopher Bunny. "So you've managed to get our man Baxter at last, I see."

"Yes," replied the rough-looking man who held the lamp. "I've got him all right. Step in, Mr. Bunny. Who have you got with you?"

"This is my office boy."

The lawyer pushed Piggy forward, and both entered the house, the door closing behind them.

"Well," muttered Bob, "if this doesn't beat anything I ever heard of! Looks as if Mr. Baxter is in the hands of the Philistines. This accounts for his absence from the hotel. I wonder what kind of game he's up against. Apparently that one-eyed lawyer is at the bottom of it. Now, I remember Mr. Baxter said that Bunny had his eye on the Golden Dream Mine, in the Palmetto district, and was



working in the interest of a combine in Goldfield who are anxious to get control of that property. This must be some sort of squeeze game they are working on our friend Baxter. How lucky it was I came to Dobbs Ferry this afternoon! And it was most fortunate that I happened to lose my way back to the station, otherwise these rascals would have had a clear field before them. Now there's a chance for me to butt in and save Mr. Baxter from being done out of his rights. I wonder what they propose to do to him. It's up to me to find that out. But I guess I'll have to go slow about it, or I may find myself in a tight box, too. Piggy wouldn't do a thing to me if he got a chance. He's down on Howard and me like a thousand of bricks. And Bunny hasn't any love for me, either. I must be cautious."

Bob's first move was to reconnoiter the premises, which he did with due care.

It was a two-story frame building, with an attic and a single story L.

From the stovepipe which protruded through the roof the boy judged that the L was used as a kitchen.

It had two windows and a door.

The windows were dark, so Bob was encouraged to try the knob of the door, and found, as he had more than half expected, that it was locked.

"I can't make an entrance that way, that's certain," he muttered. "If I can get on the roof of the wing I could reach one of those back second-story windows. If they're not secured I could sneak inside that way."

He lost no time in carrying this plan out.

He looked around till he found a tall stick of wood, which he placed against the side of the house, next to the drainage pipe which ran down from the roof.

Mounting it, he shinned the rest of the way to the low roof with the assistance of the pipe.

"So far so good," he thought. "Now to try one of the windows."

"Much to his satisfaction he found that the sash was not secured in any way, and he had no difficulty in raising it, though he did it slowly, and with as much caution as if he were a burglar, with evil intentions upon the interior.

He found himself looking into a small bedroom.

"Well, here goes," and in a moment he was standing inside.

He thought it the part of prudence to close the window.

"If I left it open somebody might come in here and think the circumstance suspicion enough to cause a search for a possible intruder," he argued.

The door of the room was not locked, Bob found, when he tried the knob, and he stepped out into the darkness of the upper landing.

There was a staircase on his right leading down to the hall door, and he saw a light shining through an open door into the lower hall.

The sound of voices in conversation came up to him, so he judged that the lawyer and the man who had admitted him, and who doubtless lived in the house, were in consultation in the room where he had originally seen the light shining.

"Well, where will I go next?" he mused. "I suppose Mr. Baxter is imprisoned in one of these upper rooms. I must investigate."

He removed his shoes, leaving them inside of the small bedroom, and started on his tour of inspection.

The first door he tried yielded to his touch.

The room was dark and the boy judged it was unoccupied.

"I wonder if it's safe to strike a match and make sure Mr. Baxter is not tied up in here?"

He decided to take the risk, entered the room, and, taking a match from his pocket safe, which he always carried about with him, though he didn't smoke, struck it upon his trousers leg, after closing the door behind him.

The room was a poorly furnished one, but there was no sign of Mr. Baxter or any one else there.

"That settles this room," said Bob, dropping the burnt match on the floor and returning to the landing. "Now for the front room."

He found no trouble getting into that, either, and found it empty of anything but the plainest furniture.

"I wonder if they've got him in the garret? If not, he's somewhere downstairs, which would rather complicate matters for me."

Bob mounted to the garret.

Standing on the topmost stair, he struck another match and looked carefully around him.

He was in a region of dust and cobwebs and unfinished woodwork.

The place looked as bare as an alkali desert in the far West.

He was about to turn on his heel to return, with a keen sense of disappointment in his heart, when some movement in a distant corner attracted his notice.

Something stirred on a pile of bags and sat up.

At that moment the match expired in the boy's fingers and he was left in complete darkness.

Striking another match, he advanced across the floor.

Before he had covered half the distance he had recognized the object, now sitting with his back against the bare and sloping roof of the house, near a single-pane window.

"Mr. Baxter!" he exclaimed, darting forward.

"Bob!" cried the Westerner, in amazement.

He was not only bound, but the rope was also tied to a ring in one of the joists.

The match went out and the boy felt his way forward the rest of the distance.

"I have come to free you, Mr. Baxter," said Bob, as he reached out and felt his friend where he lay crouched in his unpleasant situation.

"Why, how did you ever locate me here, my lad?"

"There is no time for me to go into particulars now," replied Bob, drawing his jackknife. "Christopher Bunny is in the house, and there's no telling but he and the man who lives here, Heron, I think his name is—may be up here at any moment. There will be time enough to talk when we're cut of the woods, as the saying is."



He began to saw away at the cord which secured the mine owner's wrists together behind his back.

Bob's knife was sharp and he soon accomplished his object.

"My feet next," said Mr. Baxter.

In two minutes more the man from the West was free.

But at that interesting moment the sound of voices reached them from below.

"They're coming," said Bob, in a low, tense tone.

"They're on the landing just below, and there's not a place for me to hide."

The flash of a moving light played up the garret stairway.

Steps sounded on the lower part of the stairs.

Bob felt that discovery was almost certain.

He had only time to glide hastily across the dusty floor and sink down among the rubbish of a distant corner when the heads of Mr. Bunny and Heron appeared above the level of the floor.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

##### CHRISTOPHER BUNNY MAKES HIS TERMS KNOWN TO MR. BAXTER.

Heron carried an old tin candlestick with a lighted candle in it.

They crossed the attic floor to the spot where John Baxter sat, still apparently bound, and Heron put the candle down on the floor.

"Good evening, Mr. Baxter," said Christopher Bunny. "You don't seem to be very comfortable."

"I suppose I can blame you for this, Mr. Lawyer," replied the Westerner.

"You needn't remain up here, Mr. Baxter, if you will act reasonable."

"What do you call acting reasonable, Mr. Bunny? I have been enticed to this house for a purpose that I can easily understand. There is a plot on foot to deprive my partner and myself of the control of the Golden Dream mining claims in the Palmetto district of Southern Nevada, and you are working at this end in the interests of those schemers. The letter of introduction I brought you was from a man I thought my friend, but who I have since discovered is one of the ring who are working against me. But I tell you now, Christopher Bunny, respectable Wall Street lawyer that you claim to be, that you will not succeed in your designs. Nor will this gang out West get the better of my partner. We are in this fight to stay, and unless you are looking for trouble I advise you to draw off before I take measures to bring you up with a round turn."

"What measures can you take, Mr. Baxter?" asked the lawyer, softly. "You are safely housed here, many miles from New York City. No one knows where you have gone. No one will ever know what has become of you unless you agree to my terms. Hundreds of people, many of them

well known, disappear every year in New York City. There is nothing wonderful that you, a comparative stranger, a man from the West, should vanish and leave no trace behind you. Some of these people are afterward found in the morgue," added the legal gentleman, significantly. "Mr. Baxter, the game is wholly in my hands. I am too old a bird to be caught napping. I have figured up the chances for and against myself and my clients. I have carefully laid my plans, and this is the first act in the drama. As a sensible man you will see the uselessness of butting your head against a stone wall. You can't help yourself; therefore I expect we shall soon come to a satisfactory understanding."

"Satisfactory to yourself, you mean, you old rascal," replied Mr. Baxter.

"He who holds the winning hand is naturally the master of the situation," replied Christopher Bunny, with one of his peculiar smiles.

"Then you think you are the master of the situation, do you?"

"I am satisfied of it."

"Some people make great mistakes in this world, even with their eyes open," said Mr. Baxter, calmly. "And I have heard it said there's no fool like an old one."

"You're inclined to be facetious, sir," cried the lawyer, angrily. "You will gain nothing by irritating me; on the contrary, I shall be disposed to draw the line tighter."

"What are your terms, Mr. Bunny?" asked Mr. Baxter, with a suspicious glint in his eye.

"Now you are talking sensibly, Mr. Baxter. I see we shall get on very well together, after all," answered Christopher Bunny, with a grim smile.

The Westerner made no remark, and so the lawyer continued:

"You have asked for terms. Very well, I am prepared to state them. You and your partner, William Wren, located two full claims, forty acres, in the Palmetto mining district of Southern Nevada. You took title and formed a company to develop the ore possibilities. This company you incorporated under the name of the Golden Dream Mining and Milling Company, with a capital stock of one million shares, at a par value of one hundred dollars. A certain amount of the stock was put on the market at three cents a share. A portion of this was sold to certain Goldfield people, after they had gone over the property and were satisfied there was a future in it. The money thus secured you used for development purposes, and before long you uncovered ore of a certain richness, which caused you to withdraw all the unsold stock from the market. The Goldfield people to whom I have referred then offered you and your partner ten cents a share for a good-sized block of the stock. They raised the price to fifteen cents, but it was no inducement for you to sell any more."

"I should think not," interjected Mr. Baxter.

A few days before you started East to order machinery for the mine a fresh discovery of still richer ore was made, which caused the Goldfield gentlemen to make you a flat offer for the mine as it stood."



"A most ridiculous offer—twenty-five cents a share," said Mr. Baxter, impatiently.

"It amounted in round numbers to two hundred thousand dollars cash," replied Christopher Bunny. "That offer still stands. I am instructed to obtain your half-interest for the sum of one hundred thousand dollars at any hazard. It is up to the gentlemen in Goldfield to purchase your partner's share for a similar amount, and if they haven't already succeeded, they soon will, as I have been assured by my correspondent."

"Your correspondent will find that he and his associates have bitten off more than they can chew when they tackle William Wren," replied Mr. Baxter, significantly.

"I have nothing to do with that end of the transaction. I have only to deal with you."

"And you will find me about as tough a proposition as you have ever been up against."

"I don't think so. We don't use Western methods in this part of the country. Everything runs smoother here; the wheels are nicely greased and make little or no noise. When we deal with a man we deal with him thoroughly. We use different methods with different men. You are an unusual kind of man, and I am treating you in an unusual way. Are you ready to accept one hundred thousand dollars for your interest in the Golden Dream?"

"I am not ready. I never will be ready to do that. I expect to make a million out of that mine."

"Expectations are all you will ever realize unless you accept the sum I have mentioned."

"That is your opinion, Mr. Bunny?" chuckled the Westerner.

"That is my opinion."

"As a lawyer you ought to know the risk you are taking in these proceedings."

"The risk is not in proportion to that which you assume by being stubborn."

"I don't quite catch your meaning, Mr. Bunny."

"Should you flatly refuse to deal with me after what I think is a reasonable time, some accident might happen to you which would furnish the papers with a story."

"I see," replied Mr. Baxter. "You are certainly showing your hand with a vengeance. In plain English, then, I am to be made away with unless I submit to your exactions. Is that it?"

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders, without opening his mouth.

"I fail to see how that will benefit you. I have heirs——"

Christopher Bunny smiled unpleasantly.

"I shall accomplish by proxy what I failed to do otherwise."

"I don't think you will accomplish anything."

"I have your genuine signature in my office safe. It is attached to a letter you wrote a friend in Goldfield. That signature can, in an emergency, be duplicated and made to appear on a document transferring your interest in the Golden Dream Mine to persons interested in obtaining it. You see, Mr. Baxter, I have provided for all contingencies. You are like Gulliver in the hands of the Lilliputians.

Turn any way you will, you cannot extricate yourself from the situation in which you are now placed."

"You seem to be a clever rascal, Christopher Bunny. I feel sorry for your clients. How many widows and orphan children have you robbed in your time?"

"Heron," said the lawyer, sharply, "I think I'll leave him awhile to ponder over the outlook. You can show him in the meantime how easy it is for a man to be found mangled upon the railroad track below here. I was reading in this morning's paper about a man decapitated by the railroad within a few yards of the signal tower in the freight yards some miles north, and the mystery of it all is that no one knows how he came to be on the track. The discovery was not made until a train hand, helping to make up a freight train, stumbled over his dead body. Such things often happen. The mystery seldom is unraveled. A man is drugged and laid upon the rails at the right moment. Presto! In ten minutes it is all over with him."

The lawyer winked his one good eye at Mr. Baxter in a significant way and rubbed his wrinkled hands one over the other.

"Come, Heron, let us go. You are sure he is quite safe up here?"

"As safe as can be, Mr. Bunny. I tied him myself, and I made a thorough job of it."

The lawyer took the candle and examined the bonds about Mr. Baxter's feet.

"Why, how's this?" he cried, in some alarm. "They're cut."

"Cut!" exclaimed Heron, with an oath. "Impossible!" Christopher Bunny stooped down and touched the rope. It fell apart in his fingers, and his face turned ashen.

"What does this mean, Heron?" he gasped, in an unsteady voice.

Heron appeared to be staggered by the discovery.

"I tied him as tight as——"

"Look to his arms. He must have——"

Mr. Baxter, seeing that discovery was at hand, had been preparing for the struggle he knew was to come.

Now he sprang to his feet and jumped upon Heron.

The lawyer fell back and dropped the candlestick.

Heron and Baxter clinched.

"Get hold of him, Bunny," cried his associate in villainy. "Grab his legs."

The lawyer started to do so, but just then something happened

## CHAPTER XV.

### THE BOY BROKERS ACQUIRE A PLENTIFUL SUPPLY OF GOLDEN FLEECE.

Something happened to Christopher Bunny, and Bob Seymour was the cause of it.

Crouching in the distant corner, the boy had been an



interested listener to the conversation between the Wall Street lawyer and the mine owner.

When matters reached a crisis Bob was prepared to take a hand in the affair in Mr. Baxter's interest.

He had found a short length of iron water pipe in the corner, and appropriated it as a serviceable weapon, either for attack or defense.

As soon as Mr. Baxter sprang upon Heron, Bob darted forward to attack the lawyer.

Mr. Bunny was reaching for the Westerner's legs when the boy got within striking distance of him.

Bob was taking no chances, and he brought the iron pipe down upon the lawyer's head with a force sufficient to stun him.

Christopher Bunny rolled over on the floor and then lay still.

Bob then attacked Heron.

The man, taken by surprise and placed at disadvantage, was soon overcome.

They bound him with the ropes which had been used previously to secure the mine owner.

Then Bob picked up the candle, which had not gone out, and they surveyed the situation.

"It's a case of turned tables, isn't it, Bob?" asked Mr. Baxter, with a smile of great satisfaction.

"Kind of looks that way, sir," grinned the plucky boy.

"What did you do to the lawyer?"

"I gave him a clip with this piece of pipe."

"I hope you haven't killed him," said the mine owner, stooping down and examining the unconscious man, whose nice clothes were covered with dust.

"I guess not, sir. I didn't hit him hard enough for that."

"No; he's merely stunned. We must turn these rascals over to the police at once. Who are we likely to run against downstairs?"

"I don't know, sir. All I know is that Piggy O'Toole, Bunny's office boy, is down there. He and the lawyer drove up in a buggy that they left standing close to the fence."

"A buggy, eh? That will be handy for us. We'll go downstairs now and secure the boy, and any one else we find there. Then, while I remain in the house, you can drive to the nearest house, get somebody to come back with you, and find out what the police arrangements are of this place."

Piggy O'Toole was found asleep in a chair and was not disturbed.

There was nobody else in the house.

The nearest house was an eighth of a mile away, and the

man who lived there readily agreed to take the buggy and hunt up one of the constables.

Bob returned to keep Mr. Baxter company until the officer arrived.

In the course of half an hour Heron, Mr. Bunny and Piggy were taken into custody and lodged in the lock-up, pending their examination before a justice next morning.

Mr. Baxter charged the lawyer with conspiracy to defraud and Heron as his accomplice, while Piggy was detained on general suspicion.

Bob and the mine owner took a late train for New York.

"I am under deeper obligations than ever to you, Bob," said Mr. Baxter, as they were whirled cityward. "How in the world did you discover that I was in that house?"

The young broker explained the mission that had brought him to Dobbs Ferry, how on his way from Mr. Hardy's house to the station he had lost his way, which fact led to the unexpected discovery that Mr. Baxter was a prisoner in the house at which he had meant to stop to inquire the right road.

"It looks as if the hand of Providence were in the whole thing, doesn't it, Bob? To think you should come to Dobbs Ferry at the very time when I stood most in need of help, and that your steps should be directed to the place where I was held prisoner. It is simply most remarkable. Well, Bob, I'm deeply grateful to you. You have been a good angel to me since I landed in the East. I will take care you lose nothing by it."

"I think you've done pretty well by me, too. Here I am in business, and making big money for a boy of my age, and it's all on account of the start you gave me."

"I mean to do better still by you, my lad. I've taken a fancy to you, and I'm going to make your fortune one of these days."

"Thank you, sir; but I think I should rather make my own fortune. There'd be more satisfaction in it in the long run."

On reaching the Grand Central Station they took a subway train for the Brooklyn Bridge, where they parted for the night.

Next day they both went to Dobbs Ferry, and after Bob delivered the Bullfrog-Denver stock to Mr. Hardy, receiving his check for same, they appeared against Christopher Bunny and his associate.

The result of the examination was that the prisoners were committed for trial and taken to White Plains that afternoon, where Mr. Bunny made an application for bail, sending to New York for a couple of sureties.

Piggy O'Toole was allowed to go free from want of evidence.



After Mr. Bunny had secured his release, on heavy bail, he got Heron out, also.

Subsequently, when the case came to trial, they did not appear, and their bail was forfeited.

Warrants were then issued for their arrest, but neither could be found.

The Wall Street office was closed for good, and it was found that Mr. Bunny had skipped out with every dollar he had been able to realize.

In the meantime business began to pick up with the boy brokers.

It is true, it was almost exclusively out-of-town custom, but it was just as welcome as the flowers in May.

At Bob's suggestion Mr. Baxter bought five thousand shares of Iowa C. at 51.

This stock soon began to attract notice among the brokers, and it daily advanced in price.

The prophecy of Mr. Stinson that it would reach 80 within ten days was almost realized. Iowa C. touched 80 on the thirteenth day, and Bob immediately ordered their six thousand shares and Mr. Baxter's five thousand shares sold at that figure.

It was lucky he did so, as the stock never went over 80.

It didn't go to smash like F. M. & G. had done, but it steadily declined, just as it had gone up, and eventually settled around 55.

The profits of the boy brokers on this deal amounted to close on to one hundred and eighty thousand dollars, raising their capital to over two hundred thousand dollars.

The five thousand two hundred and fifty dollars Bob received from the sale of his Bullfrog-Denver he invested in a house which he presented to his mother.

In the early part of May Mr. Baxter returned to Southern Nevada.

Before he left New York, however, he presented Bob with nine thousand additional shares of Golden Dream stock out of his individual holdings.

"You have now ten thousand shares of the mine, my lad, and you have well earned them. Hang on to them, as I said before. I will keep you constantly advised of the condition of affairs on the property. Some day you'll be able to realize a quarter of a million from that stock, perhaps more. In the meantime you will receive many dividends from it. The conspiracy against us has failed all around, as I knew it would, and the future holds nothing but golden promise and golden realizations for all lucky enough to hold shares in the richest mine in Southern Nevada."

Next fall the boy brokerage firm had business enough to employ Bob's sister.

Bob had tried to make her give up business altogether, but she wouldn't.

"I'm going to work for you boys," she said. "I really couldn't stay home, when you and Howard have such a nice office here."

"All right," replied her brother. "I suppose you will have your own way until——"

"Until when, you silly boy?"

"Until Howard annexes you for good."

"The idea!"

"Your salary will be fifteen per. Howard wanted to make it twenty, but I wouldn't stand for such extravagance. It would only spoil you."

"Well, I like that, you horrid boy!"

"Your office hours will be from ten to three, so see that you're on time," grinned her brother.

Carrie stayed with the firm two years, at the end of which time she became Mrs. Howard King.

By that time the boy brokers had acquired an enviable reputation in the Street.

They had also been quite successful in their speculative ventures and were said to be worth half a million.

Bob reckoned his private fortune at over one hundred thousand dollars, for the Golden Dream mining stock was selling at ten dollars per share, and eagerly sought after at that price.

He paid one visit to the mine during the preceding summer, and expects to go out there again at no distant day.

The boy brokers are no longer referred to as such.

They each sport a mustache these days and call themselves full-grown men.

They have a large and increasing business, and their bank balance shows a very satisfactory amount of GOLDEN FLEECE.

THE END.

Read "A MADCAP SCHEME; OR, THE BOY TREASURE HUNTERS OF COCOS ISLAND," which will be the next number (31) of "Fame and Fortune Weekly."

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